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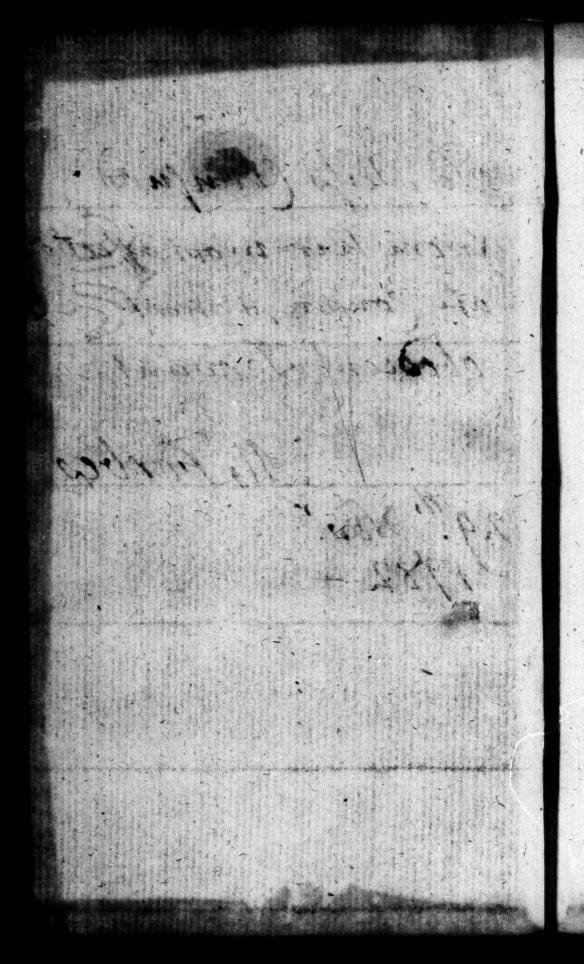
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CARDIPHONIA:

OR, THE

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HEART;

IN THE COURSE OF A REAL CORRESPONDENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF OMICRON'S LETTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Hæc res et jungit, junctos et servat amicos.

Hor. Lib. i. Sat. 3.

As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

Prov. xxvii. 19.

LONDON:

Printed for J. Buckland, No. 57. Pater-noster Row; and J. Johnson, No. 72. St. Paul's Church Yard, M.DCC, LXXXII.

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LETTER I.

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MY DEAR MADAM, Nov. - 1775. 100 much of that impatience which you speak of, towards those who differ from us in some religious sentiments, is observable on all sides. I do not consider it as the fault of a few individuals, or of this or that party, fo much as the effect of that inherent imperfection which is common to our whole race. Anger and fcorn are equally unbecoming in those who profess to be followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, and who acknowledge themselves to be both sinful and fallible; but too often fomething of this leaven will be found cleaving to the best characters, and mixed with honest endeavours to serve the best cause. But thus it was from the beginning, and we have reason to confess that we are no better than the Apostles were, who, though they meant well, manifested once and again a wrong spirit in their zeal, Luke 9, 54. Observation and experience contribute, by the grace of God, gradually to foften and sweeten our spirits; but then there will B 4 always 109838

always be ground for mutual forbearance, and mutual forgiveness on this head. However, so far as I may judge of myself, I think this hastiness is not my most easy besetting sin. I am not indeed an advocate for that indifference and lukewarmness to the truths of God, which feem to constitute the candour many plead for in the present day. But while I defire to hold fast the found doctrines of the gospel towards the persons of my fellow creatures, I wish to exercise all moderation and benevolence: Protestants or Papists, Socinians or Deifts, Jews, Samaritans, or Mahometans, all are my neighbours, they have all a claim upon me for the common offices of humanity. As to religion, they cannot all be right, nor may I compliment them by allowing the differences between us are but trivial, when I believe and know they are important; but I am not to expect them to fee with my eyes. I am deeply convinced of the truth of John Baptist's aphorism, John 3. 27, a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. I well know, that the little measure of knowledge I have obtained in the things of God has not been owing to my own wisdom and docility, but to his goodness. Nor did I get it all at once: he has been pleased to exercise much patience and long-fuffering towards me, for about twenty-seven years past, since he first gave me a defire of learning from himself. He has graciously accommodated himself to my weakness, borne with my mistakes, and helped me through innumerable prejudices, which, but for his mercy would have been insuperable hinderances: I have therefore no right

parts

right to be angry, impatient, or centorious, especially as I have ftill much to learn, and am fo poorly influenced by what I feem to know. I am weary of controversies and disputes, and defire to choose for myself, and to point out to others Mary's part, to fit at Jesus feet, and to hear his words. And bleffed be his name, fo far as I have learnt from him, I am favoured with a comfortable certainty, I know whom I have believed, and am no longer toffed about by the various winds and tides of opinions, by which I fee many are dashed one against the other. But I cannot, I must not, I dare not contend. Only as a witness for God, I am ready to bear my fimple testimony to what I have known of his truth, whenever I am properly called to it.

I agree with you, that some accounted Evangelical teachers have too much confined themselves to a few leading and favourite topics. I think this a fault; and believe, when it is constantly fo, the auditories are deprived of much edification and pleasure, which they might receive from a more judicious and comprehensive plan. The whole Scripture, as it confifts of histories, prophecies, doctrines, precepts, promifes, exhortations, admonitions, encouragements and reproofs, is the proper subject of the Gospel ministry, and every part should in its place and course be attended to; yet fo as that, in every compartment we exhibit, Jesus should be the capital figure; in whom the prophecies are fulfilled, the promises established; to whom, in a way of type and emblem, the most important B 5

parts of Scripture history have an express reserence; and from whom alone, we can receive that life, strength and encouragement, which are necessary to make obedience either pleasing or practicable. And where there is true spiritual faith in the heart, and in exercise, I believe a person will not so much need a detail of what he is to practise, as to be often greatly at a loss without it. Our Saviour's commandments are plain and clear in themselves, and that love which springs from faith is the best cassuist and commentator to apply and ensorce them.

You are pleased to say, "Forgive me if I transgress; I know the place whereon I stand is holy ground." Permit me to affure you, my dear Madam, that were I, which I am not, a person of fome importance, you would run no hazard of offending me, by controverting any of my fentiments: I hold none (knowingly) which I am not willing to submit to examination, nor am I afraid of offending you by speaking freely, when you point out my way. I should wrong you, if I thought to please you by palliating or disguising the sentiments of my heart; and if I attempted to do fo, you would fee through the defign and despise it. There may perhaps be an improper manner of chiming upon the name of Jesus, and I am not for vindicating any impropriety; yet could I feel what I ought to mean when I pronounce that name, I should not fear mentioning it too often. I am afraid of no excess in thinking highly of it, because I read it is the will of God, that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father. Laboured \$215x1

boured explications of the Trinity I always avoid. I am afraid of darkening counsel by words without knowledge. Scripture, and even reason assures me, there is but one God, whose name alone is Jehovah. Scripture likewise assures me that Christ is God, that Jesus is Jehovah; I cannot say that reason assents with equal readiness to this proposition as to the former. But admitting what the Scripture teaches concerning the evil of fin, the depravity of human nature, the method of falvation, and the offices of the Saviour; admitting that God has purposed to glorify, not his mercy only, but his juftice, in the work of redemption; that the blood shed upon the cross is a proper, adequate satisfaction for fin, and that the Redeemer is at present the shepherd of those who believe in him, and will hereafter be the judge of the world; that in order to give the effectual help which we need, it is necessary that he be always intimately with those who depend upon him in every age, in every place; must know the thoughts and intents of every heart, must have his eye always upon them, his car always open to them, his arm ever stretched out for their reliefthat they can receive nothing but what he bestows. can do nothing but as he enables them, nor stand a moment but as he upholds them: admitting thefe and the like promises, with which the word of God abounds, reason must allow, whatever difficulties may attend the thought, that only he who is God over all, bleffed for ever, is able or worthy to execute this complicated plan, every part of which requires the exertion of infinite wisdom and almighty B 6

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mighty power; nor am I able to form any clear, fatisfactory, comfortable thoughts of God, fuited to awaken my love or engage my truft, but as he has been pleased to reveal himself in the person of Jesus Christ. I believe with the Apostle, that God was once manifested in the slesh upon earth, and that he is now manifested in the slesh in heaven, and that the worthip, not only of redeemed finners, but of the holy angels, is addressed to the Lamb that was flain, and who, in that nature in which he fuffered, now exercises universal dominion, and has the government of heaven, earth, and hell upon his shoulders. This truth is the foundation upon which my hope is built, the fountain from whence I derive all my frength and confolation, and my only encouragement for venturing to the throne of grace, for grace to help in time of need.

> Till God in human flesh I see, My thoughts no comfort find; The holy, just, and sacred three Are terrors to my mind.

But if Immanuel's face appear, My hope, my joy begins; His name forbids my flavish fear, His grace removes my fins.

I am however free to confess to you, that through the pride and unbelief remaining in my heart, and the power of Satan's temptations, there are seasons when I find no small perplexity and evil reasonings upon this high point: but it is so absolutely essential to my peace, that I cannot part with

with it; for I cannot give it up, without giving up all hope of falvation on the one hand, and giving up the bible, as an unmeaning, contradictory fable on the other. And through mercy, for the most part, when I am in my right mind, I am as fully perfuaded of this truth as I am of my own existence; but from the exercises I have had about it. I have learnt to subscribe to the Apostle's declaration, That no man can fay that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. I am well satisfied, it will not be a burden to me at the hour of death, nor be laid to my charge at the day of 'judgment, that I have thought too highly of Jesus, expected too much from him myself, to laboured too much in commending and fetting him forth to others, as the Alpha and Omega, the true God and eternal life. On the contrary, alas! alas! my guilt and. grief are, that my thoughts of him are so faint, fo infrequent, and my commendations of him fo lamentably cold and disproportionate to what they ought to be.

I know not whose letters are rapturous, but I wish mine were more so: not that I am a friend to ungrounded sallies of imagination, slights of animal passions, or heat without light. But it would be amazing to me, were I not aware of human depravity (of which I consider this as one of the most striking proofs), that they who have any good hope of an interest in the gospel salvation do no find their hearts (as Dr. Watts expresses it) all on fire; and that their very looks do not express a transport of admiration, gratitude, and love, when

No.

they consider from what misery they are redeemed, to what happiness they are called, and what a price was paid for their fouls. I wish to be more like the Apostle Paul in this respect, who though he often forms and compounds new words, feems at a loss for any that could suitably describe the emotions of his heart. But I am persuaded, you would not object to the just fervors of scriptural devotion: but this holy flame can feldom be found unfullied in the present life. The temper, constitution, and infirmities of individuals will mix more or less with what they fay or do. Allowances must be made for fuch things in the present state of infirmity, for who can hope to be perfectly free from them? If the heart is right with God, and fincerely affected with the wonders of redeeming love, our gracious high priest, who knows our weakness, pities and pardons what is amiss, accepts our poor efforts, and gradually teaches us to difcern and avoid what is blameable. The work of grace, in its first stages, I sometimes compare to the lighting of a fire, where for a while there is abundance of smoke, but it burns clearer and clearer. There is often, both in letters and books, what might be very well omitted; but if a love to God and fouls be the leading principle, I pass as gentle censure upon the rest as I can, and apply to some eccentric expressions, what Mr. Prior somewhere says of our civil diffensions in this land of liberty,

A bad effect, but from a noble cause.

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LETTER H.

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MY DEAR MADAM, Feb. 16, 1776. TT gave me great comfort to find, that what I wrote concerning the divine character of Jesus as God manifest in the flesh, met with your approbation. This doctrine is, in my view, the great foundation stone upon which all true religion is built: but alas! in the prefent day, it is the stumbling stone and rock of offence, upon which too many, fondly prefuming upon their own wifdom, fall and are broken. I am so far from wondering that any should doubt of it, that I am firmly perfuaded none can truly believe it, however plainly fet forth in scripture, unless it be revealed to them from heaven; or, in the Apostle's words, that No one can call Jesus Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. I believe there are many who think they believe it, because they have taken it for granted. and never attentively confidered the difficulties with which it is attended in the eye of fallen reason. Judging by natural light, it feems impossible to believe that the title of the true God and eternal life should properly belong to that despised man who hung dead upon the cross, exposed to the insults of his cruel enemies. I know nothing that can obviate the objections the reasoning mind is ready to form against it, but a real conviction of the finfulness of fin, and the state of a finner as exposed to the curse of the holy law, and destitute of every plea-

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and hope in himself. Then the necessity of a Redeemer, and the necessity of this Redeemer's being almighty, is feen and felt, with an evidence which bears down all opposition; for neither the efficacy of his atonement and intercession, nor his sufficiency to guide, fave, protect, and feed those who trust in him, can be conceived of without it. When the eyes of the understanding are opened, the foul made acquainted with and attentive to its own flate and wants, he that runs may read this truth, not in a few detached texts of a dubious import, and liable to be twifted and tortured by the arts of criticism, but as interwoven in the very frame and texture of the bible, and written, as with a fun-beam, throughout the principal parts both of the old and new testament. If Christ be the shepherd and the husband of his people, under the gospel, and if his coming into the world did not abridge those who feared God of the privileges they were entitled to before his appearance, it follows by undeniable consequence, that he is God over all, bleffed for ever. For David tells us, that his shepherd was Jehovah; and the husband of the old testament church was the maker and God of the whole earth, the holy one of Ifrael, whose name is the Lord of Hofts, Pf. xxiii. 1 .- If. liv. 8. with xlvii. 4. I agree with you, Madam, that among the many attempts which have been made to prove and illustrate the scripture doctrine, that the Father. the Word, and the Holy Spirit, are one God, there have been many injudicious, unwarrantable things advanced, which have perplexed instead of instruct-

ing, and of which the enemies of the truth have known how to make their advantage. However, there have been tracts upon these sublime subjects which have been written with judgment and an unction, and I believe attended with a bleffing. I feem to prefer Mr. Jones's book on the Trinity to any I have feen; because he does little more than state fome of the feripture evidence for it, and draws his inferences briefly and plainly. Though even he has admitted a few texts, which may perhaps be thought not quite full to the point; and he has certainly omitted several of the most express and strongest testimonies. The best and happiest proof of all, that this doctrine is true in itself and true to us, is the experience of its effects. They who know his name will put their trust in him: they who are . rightly impressed with his astonishing condescension and love, in emptying himfelf, and fubmitting to the death of the crois for our fakes, will find themfelves under a fweet constraint to love him again, and will feel a little of that emotion of heart, which the Apostle expresses in that lively passage, Gal. vi. 14. The knowledge of Christ crucified (like Ithuriel's spear) removes the false appearances by which we have been too long cheated, and shews us the men and the things, the spirit, customs, and maxims of the world, in their just light. Were I perfectly mafter of myfelf and my fubject, I would never adduce any text in proof of a doctrine or affertion from the pulpit, which was not direct and conclusive. Because if a text is pressed into an argument, to which it has no proper relation, it ineciment rather

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rather encumbers than supports it, and raises a sufpicion that the cause is weak, and better testimonies in its favor cannot be obtained. Some misapplications of this kind have been fo long in use, that they pass pretty current, though if brought to the affay they would be found not quite sterling : but I endeavour to avoid them to the best of my judgment. Thus, for instance, I have often heard, Rom. xiv. 23. what soever is not of faith is fin, quoted to prove, that without a principle of faving faith we can perform nothing acceptable to God. Whereas it feems clear from the context, that faith is there used in another sense, and I gnifies a firm persuasion of mind respecting the lawfulness of the action. However, I doubt not but the proposition in itself is strictly true, in the other sense, if confidered detached from the connection in which it stands: but I should rather choose to prove it from other passages, where it is directly affirmed, as Heb. xi. 6. Matt. xii. 33. In fuch cafes, I think hearers should be careful not to be prejudiced against a doctrine, merely because it is not well supported; for perhaps it is capable of folid proof, though the preacher was not so happy as to hit upon that which was most suitable: and extempore preachers may fometimes hope for a little allowance upon this head, from the more candid part of their auditory, and not be made offenders for an inadvertence, which they cannot perhaps always avoid in the hurry of speaking. With respect to the application of some passages in the old testament to our Lord and Saviour. I hold it fafest to keep close to the William. specimens. specimens the Apostles have given us, and I would venture with caution if I go beyond their line; yet it is probable they have only given us a specimen, and that there are a great number of paffages which have a direct reference to gospel truths, though we may run fome hazard in making out the allusion. If St. Paul had not gone before me, I should have hesitated to affert, that the prohibition, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, was given, not upon the account of oxen, but altogether for our fakes: nor should I without his affistance have found out, that the history of Sarah and Trage me a designed allegary, or for fanta the title ference between the law and gospel covenants. Therefore when I hear ministers tracing some other allusions, I cannot be always fure that they push them too far, though perhaps they are not quite satisfactory to my judgment; for it may be, they have a farther infight into the meaning of the places than myself. And I think scriptures may be sometimes used to advantage, by way of accommodation in popular discourses, and in something of a different sense from what they bear in the place where they stand, provided they are not alledged as proofs. but only to illustrate a truth already proved or acknowledged. Though Job's friends and Job himself were mistaken, there are many great truths in their speeches, which, as such, may, I think, stand as the foundation of a discourse. Nay, I either have, or have often intended to borrow a truth from the mouth even of Satan, " Haft thou " not set a hedge about him?" Such a confession extorted

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extorted from our grand adversary placing the safety of the Lord's people, under his providential care,

in a very firiking light.

I perfectly agree with you, Madam, that our religious fensations and exercises are much influenced and tinctured by natural conflitution; and that therefore tears and warm emotions on the one hand, or a comparative dryness of spirit on the other, are no fure indications of the real flate of the heart. Appearances may agree in different persons, or vary in the same person, from causes merely natural: even a change of have some influence in railing or depressing the spi-rits, where the nerves are very delicate; and I think fuch persons are more susceptive of impresfions from the agency of invisible powers, both good and evil; an agency which, though we cannot explain, experience will not permit us to deny. However, though circumstantials rife and fall, the real difference between nature and grace remains unalterable. That work of God upon the heart which is fometimes called a new birth, at others a new creation, is as diffant from the highest effects of natural principles, or the most specious imitations which education or resolutions can produce, as light is from darkness, or life from death. Only he who made the world can either make a Chriftain, or support and carry on his own work. thirst after God as our portion; a delight in Jesus, as the only way and door; a renunciation of felf and of the world, so far as it is opposite to the spirit of the gospel: these, and the like fruits of that

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MY DEAR MADAM,

Sept. 17, 1776.

thoughts of us. Hitherto I feel no uneafines about what is before me; but I am afraid my tranquillity does not wholly spring from trust in the Lord, and submission to his will, but that a part of it at least is derived from the assurances Mr. W. gave me, that the operation would be neither difficult nor dangerous. I have not much of the hero in my constitution; if in great pains or sharp trials I should ever shew a becoming fortitude, it must be given me from above. I desire to leave all with him, in whose hands my ways are, and who has promised me strength according to my day.

I rejoice that the Lord has not only made you desirous of being useful to others in their spiritual concerns, but has given you in some instances to see, that your desires and attempts have not been in vain. I shall thankfully accept of the commission you are pleased to offer me, and take a pleasure in perusing any papers you may think proper to put into my hands, and offer you my sentiments with that simplicity, which I am persuaded will be much more agreeable to you than compliments. Though I know there is in general a delicacy and difficulty in services of this kind, yet with respect to yourself I seem to have nothing to sear.

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I can almost smile now, to think you once classed me amongst the floits. If I dare speak with confidence of myfelf in any thing, I think I may lay claim to a little of that pleafing, painful thing, fenfibility. I need not boast of it, for it has too often been my fnare, my fin, and my punishment. Yet I would be thankful for a fpice of it, as the Lord's gift, and when rightly exercised it is valuable; and I think I should make but an aukward minister without it, especially here. Where there is this fenfibility in the natural temper, it will give a tincture or cast to our religious expression. Indeed I often find this fenfibility weakest where it should be strongest, and have reason to reproach myfelf that I am no more affected by the character, love, and fufferings of my Lord and Saviour; and my own peculiar, personal obligations to him. However, my views of religion have been fuch for many years, as I supposed more likely to make me deemed an enthusiast than a stoic. A moonlight head-knowledge derived from a fystem of sentiments, however true in themselves, is in my judgment a poor thing: nor, on the other hand, am I an admirer of those rapturous fallies, which are more owing to a warm imagination, than to a just perception of the power and importance of gospel truth. The gospel addresses both head and heart: and where it has its proper effect, where it is received as the word of God, and is clothed with the authority and energy of the holy Spirit, the understanding is enlightened, the affections awakened and engaged, the will brought into subjection, and the whole

whole foul delivered to its impression as wax to the seal. When this is the case; when the affections do not take the lead, and push forward with a blind impulse, but arise from the principles of scripture, and are governed by them, the more warmth the better. Yet in this state of infirmity, nothing is perfect; and our natural temperament and dispofition will have more influence upon our religious fensations than we are ordinarily aware. well to know how to make proper allowances and abatements upon this head, in the judgment we form both of ourselves and of others. Many good people are diffrested and alternately elated by frames and feelings, which perhaps are more conflitutional than properly religious experiences. I dare not tell you, Madam, what I am; but I can tell you what I wish to be. The love of God, as manifested in Jefus Chrift, is what I would wish to be the abiding object of my contemplation; not merely to speculate upon it as a doctrine, but fo to feel it, and my own interest in it, as to have my heart filled with its effects, and transformed into its refemblance; that with this glorious exemplar in my view, I may be animated to a spirit of benevolence, love, and compassion, to all around me. That my love may be primarily fixed upon him who has so loved me, and then, for his fake, diffused to all his children. and to all his creatures. Then, knowing that much is forgiven to me, I should be prompted to the ready exercise of forgiveness, if I have aught against any. Then I should be humble, patient, and submissive under all his dispensations; meek, clails gentle,

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gentle, forbearing, and kind to my fellow worms. Then I should be active and diligent in improving all my talents and powers in his service, and for his glory; and live not to myself, but to him who loved me and gave himself for me.

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depode sells blos et al am, Madam, sine ma

Your most obedient and obliged,

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Vol. II,

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genile, feelecating, and kind to my fellow women. Then I thought be active and differed in improving

MY DEAR MADAM, \$ 1820 Nov. 1776.

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T Am persuaded you need not be told, that though L there are perhaps supposable extremities in which felf would prevail over all confiderations, yet in general it is more easy to suffer in our own persons, than in the persons of those whom we dearly love; for through such a medium our apprehensions posfibly receive the idea of the trouble enlarged beyond its just dimensions; and it would sit lighter upon us if it were properly our own case, for then we should feel it all, and there would be no room for imagination to exaggerate.

But though I feel grief, I trust the Lord has mercifully preserved me from impatience and murmuring, and that in the midft of all the pleadings of flesh and blood, there is a something within me that aims to fay without referve or exception, Not

my will, but thine be done.

It is a comfortable confideration, that he with whom we have to do, our great high-priest, who once put away our fins by the facrifice of himfelf, and now for ever appears in the presence of God for us, is not only possessed of sovereign authority and infinite power, but wears our very nature, and feels and exercises in the highest degree those tendernesses and commiserations, which I conceive are essential to humanity in its perfect state. The whole history of his wonderful life is full of inimitable

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miable table inflances of this kind. His bowels were moved before his arm was exerted; he condefeended tomingle tears with mourners, and wept over diffreffes which he intended to relieve. He is still the same in his exalted state; compassions dwell within his heart. In la way inconceivable to us, but confiftent with his fupreme dignity and perfection of happiness and glory, he still feels for his people. When Saul persecuted the members upon earth, the head complained from heaven : and fooner thall the most tender mother sit infensible and inattentive to the cries and wants of her infant, than the Lord Jefus be an unconcerned spectator of his suffering children. No, with the eye and the ear and the heart of a friend he attends to their forrows: he counts their fighs, puts their tears in his bottle; and when our spirits are overwhelmed within us. he knows our path, and adjusts the time, the meafure of our trials, and every thing that is necessary for our present support and seasonable deliverance. with the fame unerring wifdom and accuracy as he weighed the mountains in scales and hills in a balance, and meeted out the heavens with a span. Still more, besides his benevolent, he has an experimental fympathy. He knows our forrows, not merely as he knows all things, but as one who has been in our fituation, and who, though without fin himself, endured when upon earth inexpressibly more for us than he will ever lay upon us. He has fanctified poverty, pain, difgrace, temptation and death, by paffing through these states; and in whatever states his people are,

they may by faith have fellowship with him in their fufferings, and he wilk by fympathy and love have fellowship and interest with them in theirs. What then shall we fear, or of what shall we complain? when all our concerns are written upon his heart, and their management, to the very hairs of our head, are under his care and providence; when he pities us more than we can do ourfelves, and has engaged his almighty power to fustain and relieve However, as he is tender he is wife also; he loves us, but especially with regard to our best interests. If there were not something in our hearts and our fituation that required discipline and medicine, he fo delights in our prosperity that we should never be in heaviness. The innumerable comforts and mercies with which he enriches even those we call our darker days, are fufficient proofs that he does not willingly grieve us: but when he fees a need be for chastisement, he will not withhold it because he loves us; on the contrary, that is the very reason why he afflicts. He will put his silver into the fire to purify it, but he fits by the furnace as a refiner, to direct the process, and to secure the end he has in view, that we may neither fuffer too much, nor suffer in vain.

I am, my dear Madam,
Yours, &c.

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LETTER V.

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My DEAR MADAM,

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T Have often preached to others of the benefit of affliction, but my own path for many years has been fo smooth, and my trials, though I have not been without trials, comparatively so light and few, that I have feemed to myfelf to fpeak by rote upon a subject of which I had not a proper feeling. Yet the many exercises of my poor, afflicted people, and the sympathy the Lord has given me with them in their troubles, has made this a frequent and favorite topic of my ministry among them. The advantages of afflictions, when the Lord is pleafed to employ them for the good of his people, are many and great. Permit me to mention a few of them; and the Lord grant that we may all find those bleffed ends answered to ourselves, by the trials he is pleased to appoint us.

Afflictions quicken us to prayer. It is a pity it should be so, but experience testifies, that a long course of ease and prosperity, without painful changes, has an unhappy tendency to make us cold and formal in our secret worship; but troubles rouse our spirits, and constrain us to call upon the Lord in good earnest, when we seel a need of that thelp which we only can have from him.

They are useful, and in a degree necessary, to keep alive in us a conviction of the vanity and C 3 unsatisfying

unfatisfying nature of the present world, and all its enjoyments; to remind us that this is not our rest, and to call our thoughts upwards, where our true treafure is, and where our conversation ought to be. When things go on much to our wish, our hearts are too prone to fay, It is good to be here. It is probable that had Moses, when he came to invite Ifrael to Canaan, found them in prosperity, as in the days of Joseph, they would have been very unwilling to remove; but the afflictions they were previously brought into made his message welcome. Thus the Lord, by pain, fickness, and disappointments, by breaking our cifterns and withering our gourds, weakens our attachment to this world, and makes the thought of quitting it more familiar and more defirables in the state of the most to since

A child of God cannot but greatly defire a more enlarged and experimental acquaintance with his holy word; and this attainment is greatly promoted by our trials. The far greater part of the promises in scripture are made and suited to a state of affliction; and though we may believe they are true, we cannot fo well know their fweetness, power, and fuitableness, unless we ourselves are in a state to which they refer: The Lord fays, Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver now till the day of trouble comes, fuch a promise is like a city of refuge to an Ifraelite, who not having flain a man, was in no danger of the avenger of blood. He had a privilege near him, of which he knew not the use and value, because he was not in the case for which it was provided. But some

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can fay, I not only believe this promife upon the authority of the speaker, but I can set my seal to it: I have been in trouble; I took this course for relief, and I was not disappointed. The Lord verily heard and delivered me. Thus afflictions likewise give occasion of our knowing and noticing more of the Lord's wisdom, power, and goodness, in supporting and relieving, than we should otherwise have known.

I have not time to take another sheet, must therefore contract my homily. Afflictions evidence to ourselves, and manifest to others the reality of grace. And when we suffer as Christians, exercise some measure of that patience and submission, and receive some measure of these supports and supplies, which the gospel requires and promises to believers, we are more confirmed that we have not taken up with mere notions; and others may be convinced, that we do not follow cunningly devised fables. They likewise strengthen by exercise our graces: as our limbs and natural powers would be feeble if not called to daily exertion, fo the graces of the Spirit would languish, without something was provided to draw them out to use. And to fay no more, they are honourable, as they advance our conformity to Jesus our Lord, who wasa man of forrows for our fake. Methinks if we might go to heaven without fuffering, we should be unwilling to defire it. Why should we ever wish. to go by any other path than that which he has confecrated and endeared by his own example? efpecially as his people's fufferings are not penal;

there is no wrath in them; the cup he puts in their hands is very different from that which he drank for their fakes, and is only medicinal to promote their chief good.—Here I must stop; but the subject is fruitful, and might be pursued through a quire of paper.

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wife diere keema, to the seem one in the first I have not time no take another facet, and there is a convert my horaly. Afflictions evidence to curfolyes; and recented to others the reality of grant, And who we helfer as Christians, exercise force mending of the purces a red liberifiche, and regions bear acading of the dispensarial highligh which the police requires and promities to believers, contact made centinued, that we have not taken up with mere notions; and others may be canvarend, that ve do not follow quantingly devisid (at its. They likewife forencemental exercise hiver green a bear shall and a terror and be asial, it not colled to daily exercion, to the gracing of the Spirit world languish, without forcesign was previded to draw tham out to une. And to fay no more, they are bonourable, as they advance our con one ry to join our Lord, who was a serve of foreaves for our fixes. Millioning if was od bluedt ow grait Pal tarbar a bodes to tea a trin ear the gradefied of Why Could be ever with to gothy any other your than that which he has A TTER LA Land by his own example? efpropadly as his prople's inficings are not pend; Signif

LETTER VI.

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MY DEAR MADAM, August - 1778.

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TOUR obliging favor of the 22d from B-, which I received last night, demands an immediate acknowledgment. Many things which would have offered by way of answer, must for the present be postponed; for the same post brought an information which turns my thoughts to one subject. What shall I say? Topics of consolation are at hand in abundance; they are familiar to your mind, and was I to fill the sheet with them, I could fuggest nothing but what you already know. Then are they confolatory indeed, when the Lord him-This he felf is pleased to apply them to the heart. has promifed, and therefore we are encouraged to expect it. This is my prayer for you: I fincerely fympathize with you: I cannot comfort you, but he can, and I trust he will. How impertinent would it be to advise you to forget or suspend the feelings which fuch a stroke must excite! who can help feeling! nor is sensibility in itself finful. Christian refignation is very different from that Roical stubbornness, which is most easily practifed by those unamiable characters whose regards centre wholly in felf: nor could we in a proper manner exercise submission to the will of God under our trials, if we did not feel them. He who knows our frame is pleased to allow, that afflictions for the

the present are not joyous but grievous. But to them that fear him he is near at hand, to support their spirits, to moderate their grief, and in the iffue to fanctify it, fo that they shall come out of the furnace refined, more humble, and more fpiritual. There is, however, a part affigned us: we are to pray for the help in need, and we are not wilfully to give way to the impression of overwhelming forrow. We are to endeavour to turn our thoughts to fuch confiderations as are fuited to alleviate it; our deferts as finners, the many mercies we are still indulged with, the still greater afflictions which many of our fellow-creatures endure. and above all, the fufferings of Jesus, that man of forrows, who made himself intimately acquainted with grief for our fakes.

When the will of the Lord is manifested to us by the event, we are to look to him for grace and strength, and be still to know that he is God, that he has a right to dispose of us and ours as he pleases, and that in the exercise of this right he is most certainly good and wise. We often complain of losses, but the expression is rather improper. Strictly speaking, we can lose nothing, because we have no real property in any thing. Our earthly comforts are lent us, and when recalled, we ought to return and resign them with thankfulness to him who has let them remain so long in our hands. But as I said above, I do not mean to enlarge in this strain: I hope the Lord, the only comforter, will bring such thoughts with warmth and efficacy upon your mind. Your wound, while fresh, is painful;

painful; but faith, prayer, and time, will, I truff, gradually render it tolerable. There is fomething fascinating in grief; painful as it is, we are prone to indulge it, and to brood over the thoughts and circumstances which are suited (like suel to fire) to heighten and prolong it. When the Lord afflicts, it is his defign that we should grieve: but in this, as in all other things, there is a certain moderation which becomes a Christian, and which only grace can teach; and grace teaches us, not by books or by hearfay, but by experimental lessons: all beyond this should be avoided and guarded against as finful and hurtful. Grief, when indulged and excessive, preys upon the spirits, injures health, indisposes us for duty, and causes us to shed tears which deserve more tears. This is a weeping world. Sin has filled it with thorns and briars, with croffes and calamities. It is a great hospital, resounding with groans in every quarter. It is as a field of battle, where many are falling around us continually; and it is more wonderful that we escape so well, than that we are fometimes wounded. We must have some share; it is the unavoidable lot of our nature and state; it is likewise needful in point of discipline. The Lord will certainly chasten those whom he loves, though others may feem to pass for a time with impunity. That is a sweet, instructive, and important pallage, Heb. xii. 5, 11. It is fo plain, that it needs no comment; fo full, that a comment would but weaken it. May the Lord inscribe it upon your heart, my dear Madam, and upon mine, 1 am your most obedient,

obliged, and humble Servant.

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LETTER VII.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Nov. - 1778.

TOUR obliging favor raised in me a variety of emotions when I first received it, and has revived them this! morning while perufing it again. I have mourned and rejoiced with you, and felt pain and pleasure in succession as you diversified the fubject. However, the weight of your grief I was willing to confider as a thing that is past; and the thought that you had been mercifully supported under it, and brought through it; that you were restored home in safety, and that at the time of writing you were tolerably well and composed, made joy upon the whole preponderate; and I am more disposed to congratulate you, and join you in praising the Lord for the mercies you enumerate, than to prolong my condolence upon the mournful parts of your letter.-Repeated trying occasions have made me well acquainted with the anxious inquiries with which the busy, poring mind is apt to purfue departed friends: it can hardly be otherwise under some circumstances. I have found prayer the best relief. I have thought it very allowable to avail myfelf to the utmost of every favorable confideration; but I have had the most comfort, when I have been enabled to refign the whole concern into his hands, whose thoughts and ways, whose power and goodness are infinitely superior to our colored, and humble Services. conceptions.

conceptions. I consider in such cases, that the great Redeemer can fave to the uttermost, and the great Teacher can communicate light and impress truth, when and how he pleases. I trust the power of his grace and compassion will hereafter triumphantly appear, in many instances, of persons, who on their dying beds, and in their last moments, have been by his mercy constrained to feel the importance and reality of truths, which they did not properly understand and attend to in the hour of health and prosperity. Such a salutary change I have frequently, or at least more than once, twice, or thrice, been an eye-witness to, accompanied with fuch evidence as, I think, has been quite fatiffactory. And who can fay fuch a change may not often take place, when the perfon who is the fubject of it is too much enfeebled to give an account to by-standers of what is transacting in his mind! Thus I have encouraged my hope. But the best fatisfaction of all is, to be duly impressed with the voice that fays, Be still, and know that I am God. These words direct us, not only to his sovereignty, his undoubted right to do what he will with his own, but to all his adorable and amiable perfections, by which he has manifested himself to us in the Son of his love.

You have taken leave of your favorite trees and the scenes of your younger life, but a few years sooner than you must have done, if the late dispensation had not taken place. All must be left soon, for all below is polluted, and in its best state is too scanty to afford us happiness. If we are believers

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pared with what we shall obtain. To exchange a dungeon for a palace, earth for heaven, will call for no self-denial, when we stand upon the threshold of eternity, and shall have a clearer view than we have now of the vanity of what is passing from us, and the glory of what is before us. The partial changes we meet with in our way through life are designed to remind us of, and prepare us for the great change which awaits us at the end of it. The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that solemn hour.

I am, Madam, your most obedient, &c.

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LETTER I

My DEAR MADAM, and the state of the state of

Y heart is full, yet I must restrain it. Many 1 thoughts which crowd my mind, and would have vent were I writing to another person; would to you be unseasonable. I write not to remind you of what you have loft, but of what you have, which you cannot lofe. May the Lord put a word into my heart that may be acceptable; and may his good Spirit accompany the perusal, and enable you to say with the Apostle, that as sufferings abound, confolations also abound by Jesus Christ. Indeed I can sympathize with you. I remember too the delicacy of your frame, and the tenderness of your natural spirits; so that were you not interested in the exceeding great and precious promifes of the gospel, I should be ready to fear you must fink aunder

under your trial. But I have some faint conceptions of the all-fufficiency and faithfulness of the Lord, and may address you in the King's words to Daniel, Thy God whom thou fervest continually, he will deliver thee. Motives for refignation to his will abound in his word, but it is an additional and crowning mercy, that he has promifed to apply and inforce them in time of need. He has faid, My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and as thy day is, fo shall thy strength be. This I trust you have already experienced. The Lord is so rich and so good, that he can by a glance of thought compenfate his children for whatever his wisdom sees fit to deprive them of If he gives them a lively fense of what he has delivered them from, and prepared for them, or of what he himself submitted to endure for their fakes, they find at once light springing up out of darkness hard things hacome casty and bitter fweets I remember to have read of a good man in the left contuny probably you may have met with the story) who, when his beloved and only fon law illowas for fome time greatly anxious about the event. One morning heiftaid longer than ufual in his closet, while he was there his fondied. When he came out, his family were afraid to tell him, but like David he perceived it by their looks; and when upon inquiry they faid it was fo, he received the news with a composure that surprised them, But he foon explained the reason, by telling them, that for such discoveries of the Lord's goodness as he had been favoured with that morning, he could be content to lofe a fon every day. Yes. oobau.

Yes, Madam, though every stream must fail, the fountain is still full and still flowing. All the comfort you ever received in your dear friend was from the Lord, who is abundantly able to comfort you, still; and he is gone but a little before you. May your faith anticipate the joyful and glorious meeting you will shortly have in a better world. Then your worship and converse together will be to unspeakable advantage, without impersection, interruption, abatement, or end. Then all tears shall be wiped away, and every cloud removed; and then you will see, that all your concernments here below (the late afflicting dispensation not excepted) were appointed and adjusted by infinite wisdom and infinite love.

The Lord, who knows our frame, does not expect or require that we should aim at a stoical indifference under his visitations. He allows, that afflictions are at present not joyous, but grievous; yea, he was pleased when upon earth to weep with his mourning friends, when Lazarus died. But he has graciously provided for the prevention of that anguish and bitterness of sorrow, which is, upon such occasions, the portion of such as live without God in the world; and has engaged, that all shall work together for good, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. May he bless you with a sweet serenity of spirit, and a cheerful hope of the glory that shall shortly be revealed.

I intimated, that I would not trouble you with my own sense and share of this loss. If you remember the great kindness I always received from

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Mr. T— and yourself, as often as opportunity afforded, and if you will believe me possessed of any sensibility or gratitude, you will conclude that my concern is not small. I feel likewise for the public. Will it be a consolation to you, Madam, to know, that you do not mourn alone? A character so exemplary as a friend, a counsellor, a Christian, and a minister, will be long and deeply regretted; and many will join with me in praying, that you, who are most nearly interested, may be signally supported, and feel the propriety of Mrs. Rowe's acknowledgment,

Thou dost but take the dying lamp away,

To bless me with thine own unclouded day.

We join in most affectionate respects and condolence. May the Lord bless you and keep you, life up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

I am, my dear Madam,
Your most obedient
and obliged Servant.

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MY DEAR MADAM, HART WALL

Have long and often purposed waiting upon you with a fecond letter, though one thing or other ffill caused delay; for though I could not but wish to hear from you, I was far from making that a condition of my writing. If you have leifure and spirits to favor me with a line now and then, it will give us much pleasure; but if not, it will be a fufficient inducement with me to write, to know that you give me liberty, and that you will receive my letters in good part. At the fame time I must add, that my various engagements will not permit me to break in upon you fo often as my fincere affection would otherwise prompt me to do.

I heartily thank you for yours, and hope my foul desires to praise the Lord on your behalf. I am persuaded that his goodness to you, in supporting you under a trial fo sharp in itself, and in the circumstances that attended it, has been an encouragement and comfort to many. It is in such apparently severe times, that the all-sufficiency and faithfulness of the Lord, and the power and proper effects of his precious Gospel, are most eminently displayed. I would hope, and I do believe, that the knowledge of your case has animated some of the Lord's people against those anxious fears which they fometimes feel, when they look upon their earthly comforts

comforts with too careful an eye, and their hearts are ready to fink at the thought, What should I do, and how should I behave, were the Lord pleased to take away my defire with a stroke? But we see he can supply their absence, and afford us superior comforts without them. The Gospel reveals one thing needful, the pearl of great price; and fupposes, that they who possess this are provided for against all events, and have ground of unshaken hope, and a fource of never-failing confolation under every change they can meet with during their pilgrimage state. When his people are enabled to fet their feal to this, not only in theory, when all things go fmooth, but practically, when called upon to pass through the fire and water; then his grace is glorified in them and by them; then it appears, both to themselves and to others, that they have neither followed cunningly devised fables, nor amused themselves with empty notions; then they know in themselves, and it is evidenced to others. that God is with them of a truth. In this view a believer, when in fome good measure divested from that narrow, felfish disposition which cleaves so close to us by nature, will not only submit to trials, but rejoice in them, notwithstanding the feelings and reluctance of the flesh. For if I am redeemed from mifery by the blood of Jesus, and if he is now preparing me a mansion near himself, that I may drink of the rivers of pleasure at his right-hand for evermore, the question is not (at least ought not to be) How may I pass through life with the least inconvenience? but How may my little span of life

life be made most subservient to the praise and glory of him who loved me and gave himself for me? Where the Lord gives this defire he will gratify it; and as afflictions for the most part afford the fairest opportunities of this kind, therefore it is, that those whom he is pleafed eminently to honor are usually called, at one time or another, to the heaviest trials; not because he loves to grieve them, but because he hears their prayers and accepts their defires of doing him service in the world. The post of honour in war is so called, because attended with difficulties and dangers, which but few are supposed equal to; yet generals usually allot these hard services to their favorites and friends, who on their parts eagerly accept them, as tokens of favor and marks of confidence. Should we, therefore, not account it an honor and a privilege, when the Captain of our falvation assigns us a difficult post? fince he can and does (which no earthly commander can) inspire his soldier with wisdom, courage, and strength, suitable to their situation. 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. I am acquainted with a few who have been led thus into the fore front of the battle: they fuffered much; but I have never heard them fay they suffered too much; for the Lord stood by them and strengthened them. Go on, my dear Madam: yet a little while, Jesus will wipe away all tears from your eyes; you will see your beloved friend again, and he and you will rejoice together for ever.

April 8, 1 am, dearest Madam, 1775. Your affectionate and obliged servant.

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LETTER III.

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MY DEAR MADAM,

HE manner in which you mention Omicron's L letters, I hope, will rather humble me than puff me up. Your favorable acceptance of them, if alone, might have the latter effect; but alas! I feel myself so very defective in those things, the importance of which I endeavoured to point out to others, that I almost appear to myself to be one of those who say but do not. I find it much easier to fpeak to the hearts of others, than to my own. Yet I have cause beyond many to bless God, that he has given me some idea of what a Christian ought to be, and I hope a real defire of being one myself; but verily I have attained but a very little way. A friend hinted to me, that the character I have given of C. or Grace in the full ear, must be from my own experience, or I could not have written it. To myself, however, it appears otherwife; but I am well convinced, that the state of C. is attainable, and more to be defired than mountains of gold and filver. But I find you complain likewise: though it appears to me, and I believe to all who know you, that the Lord has been pecuharly gracious to you, in giving you much of the spirit in which he delights, and by which his name and the power of his Gospel are glorified. It feems, therefore, that we are not competent judges

judges either of ourselves or of others. I take it for granted, that they are the most excellent Christians who are most abased in their own eyes; but lest you fhould think upon this ground that I am something, because I can say so many humiliating things of myfelf, I must prevent your over-rating me, by affuring you, that my confessions rather express what I know I ought to think of myself, than what I actually do. Naturalists suppose, that if the matter of which the earth is formed were condensed as much as it is capable of, it would occupy but a very fmall space; in proof of which they observe, that a cubical pane of glass, which appears smooth and impervious to us, must be exceedingly porous in itself; since in every assignable point it receives and transmits the rays of light; and yet gold, which is the most folid substance we are acquainted with, is but about eight times heavier than glass, which is made up (if I may fo fay) of nothing but pores. In like manner I conceive, that inherent grace, when it is dilated, and appears to the greatest advantage in a finner, would be found to be very small and inconsiderable, if it was condensed, and absolutely separated from every mixture. highest attainments in this life are very inconsiderable, conpared with what should properly result from our relation and obligations to a God of infinite holiness. The nearer we approach to him the more we are fenfible of this. While we only hear of God as it were by the ear, we feem to be fomething; but when, as in the case of Job, he discovers himself more sensibly to us, Job's language becomes VOL. II. ours,

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ours, and the height of our attainment is, To abhor ourselves in dust and ashes.

I hope I do not write too late to meet you at I pray that your health may be benefited by the waters, and your foul comforted by the Lord's bleffing upon the ordinances, and the converse of his children. If any of the friends you expected to see are still there, to whom we are known, and my name should be mentioned, I beg you to fay, we defire to be respectfully remembered to them. Had I wings, I would fly to Bath while you are there. As it is, I endeavour to be with you in spirit. There certainly is a real, though secret, a fweet, though mysterious communion of faints, by virtue of their common union with Jesus. Feeding upon the same bread, drinking of the same fountain, waiting at the same mercy-feat, and aiming at the same ends, they have fellowship one with another, though at a distance. Who can tell how often the Holy Spirit, who is equally present with them all, touches the hearts of two or more of his children at the same instant, so as to excite a sympathy of pleasure, prayer, or praise, on each other's account? It revives me fometimes in a dull and dark hour to reflect, that the Lord has in mercy given me a place in the hearts of many of his people; and perhaps some of them may be speaking to him on my behalf, when I have hardly power to utter a word for myself. For kind services of this fort I persuade myself I am often indebted to you. O that I were enabled more fervently to repay you in the same way! I can say, that I attempt it: I love

love and honour you greatly, and your concern-

ments are often upon my mind.

We spent most of a week with Mr. B—— since we returned from London, and he has been once here. We have reason to be very thankful for his connection: I find but sew like minded with him, and his family is filled with the grace and peace of the Gospel. I never visit them, but I meet with something to humble, quicken, and edify me. O! what will heaven be, where there shall be all who love the Lord Jesus, and they only; where all impersection, and whatever now abates or interrupts their joy in their Lord and in each other shall cease for ever. There at least I hope to meet you, and spend an eternity with you, in admiring the riches and glory of redeeming love.

We join in a tender of the most affectionate

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I am, dear Madam,

Your much obliged Friend and Servant.

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LETTER IV.

THAT can I say for myfelf? To let your V obliging letter remain fo long unanswered, when your kind folicitude for us induced you to write? I am ashamed of the delay. You would have heard from me immediately, had I been at home. But I have reason to be thankful that we were providentially called to London a few days before the fire; fo that Mrs. --- was mercifully preferved from the alarm and shock she must have felt, had she been upon the spot. Your letter followed me hither, and was in my possession more than a week before my return. I proposed writing every day, but indeed I was much hurried and engaged. Yet I am not excused: I ought to have faved time from my meals or my fleep, rather than appear negligent or ungrateful. I now seize the first post I could write by fince I came home. The fire devoured twelve houses; and it was a mercy, and almost a miracle, that the whole town was not destroyed; which must, humanly speaking, have been the case, had not the night been calm, as two thirds of the buildings were thatched. No lives were loft; no person considerably hurt; and I believe the contributions of the benevolent will prevent the loss from being greatly felt. It was at the distance of a quarter of a mile from my house.

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Your command limits my attention, at present, to a part of your letter, and points me out a fubject. Yet at the same time you lay me under a difficulty. I would not willingly offend you, and I hope the Lord has taught me not to aim at faying handsome things. I deal not in compliments, and religious compliments are the most unseemly of any. But why might I not express my sense of the grace of God, manifested in you as well as in another? I believe our hearts are all alike, destitute of every good, and prone to every evil. Like money from the fame mint, they bear the same impression of total depravity: but grace makes a difference, and grace deserves the praise. Perhaps it ought not greatly to displease you, that others do, and must, and will think better of you than you do of yourfelf. If I do, how can I help it, when I form my judgment entirely from what you fay and write? I cannot confent, that you should seriously appoint me to examine and judge of your state. I thought you knew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, what your views and defires are; yea, you express them in your letter, in full agreement with what the Scripture declares of the principles, defires, and feelings of a Christian. It is true that you feel contrary principles, that you are conscious of defects and defilements; but it is equally true, that you could not be right if you did not feel these things. To be conscious of them and humbled for them is one of the furest marks of grace, and to be more deeply sensible of them than formerly is the best evidence of growth in grace. But when the enemy dependence would

would tempt us to doubt and distrust, because we are not perfect, then he fights, not only against our peace, but against the honour and faithfulness of our dear Lord. Our righteousness is in him, and our hope depends, not upon the exercise of grace in us, but upon the fulness of grace and love in him,

and upon his obedience unto death.

There is, my dear Madam, a difference between the holiness of a finner, and that of an angel. The angels have never finned, nor have they tafted of redeeming love; they have no inward conflicts, no law of fin warring in their members: their obedience is perfect; their happiness is compleat. if I be found among redeemed finners, I need not wish to be an angel. Perhaps God is not less glorified by your obedience, and not to shock you, I will add by mine, than by Gabriel's. It is a mighty manifestation of his grace indeed, when it can live, and act, and conquer in fuch hearts as ours; when in defiance of an evil nature and an evil world, and all the force and fubtilty of Satan, a weak worm is still upheld, and enabled not only to climb, but to thresh the mountains; when a fmall spark is preserved through storms and floods. In these circumstances the work of grace is to be estimated, not merely from its imperfect appearance, but from the difficulties it has to ftruggle with and overcome. And therefore our holiness does not confift in great attainments, but in spiritual desires, in hungerings, thirstings, and mournings; in humiliation of heart, poverty of spirit, submission, meekness; in cordial, admiring thoughts of Jesus, and dependence

dependence upon him alone for all we want. Indeed these may be said to be great attainments, but they who have most of them are most sensible that they, in and of themselves, are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing; and see daily cause for abhorring themselves, and repenting in dust and ashes.

Our view of death will not alway be alike, but in proportion to the degree in which the Holy Spirit is pleafed to communicate his sensible influence. We may anticipate the moment of dissolution with pleasure and desire in the morning, and be ready to shrink from the thought of it before night. But though our frames and perceptions vary, the report of faith concerning it is the same. The Lord usually referves dying strength for a dying hour. When Israel was to pass Jordan, the Ark was in the river; and though the rear of the Host could not see it, yet as they successively came forward and approached the banks, they all beheld the Ark, and all went fafely over. As you are not weary of living, if it be the Lord's pleasure, so I hope, for the fake of your friends and the people whom you love, he will spare you amongst us a little longer; but when the time shall arrive which he has appointed for your dismission, I make no doubt but he will overpower all your fears, filence all your enemies, and give you a comfortable, triumphant entrance into his kingdom. You have nothing to fear from death, for Jesus, by dying, has disarmed it of its sting, has perfumed the grave, and opened the gates of glory for his believing people. Satan, fo far as he is permitted, will affault our peace, but D 4

he is a vanquished enemy: our Lord holds him in a chain, and sets him bounds which he cannot pass. He provides for us likewise the whole armor of God, and has promised to cover our heads himself in the day of battle, to bring us honorably through every skirmish, and to make us more than conquerors at last. If you think my short, unexpected interview with Mr. C—— may justify my wishing he should know that I respect his character, love his person, and rejoice in what the Lord has done and is doing for him and by him, I beg you to tell him so: but I leave it intirely to you.

We join in most affectionate respects.

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M R. _____

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

Your case reminds me of my own: my first desires towards the ministry were attended with great uncertainties and difficulties, and the perplexity of my own mind was heightened by the various and opposite judgments of my friends. The advice I have to offer is the result of painful experience and exercise, and for this reason perhaps may not be unacceptable to you. I pray our gracious Lord to make it useful.

I was long diffressed, as you are, about what was or was not a proper call to the ministry; it now seems to me an easy point to solve, but per-

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haps will not be so to you, till the Lord shall make it clear to yourself in your own case. I have not room to say so much as I could: in brief, I think

it principally includes three things:

I. A warm and earnest defire to be employed in I apprehend, the man who is once this fervice. moved by the Spirit of God to this work will prefer it, if attainable, to thousands of gold and filver: fo that though he is at times intimidated by a fense of its importance and difficulty, compared with his own great infufficiency (for it is to be prefumed a call of this fort, if indeed from God, will be accompanied with humility and felf-abasement,) yet he cannot give it up. I hold it a good rule to inquire in this point, whether the defire to preach is most fervent in our most lively and spiritual frames. and when we are most laid in the dust before the Lord? If so, it is a good sign. But if, as is sometimes the case, a person is very earnest to be a preacher to others, when he finds but little hungerings and thirstings after grace in his own foul, it is then to be feared, his zeal springs rather from a felfish principle than from the Spirit of God.

2. Besides this affectionate desire and readiness to preach, there must in due season appear some competent sufficiency as to gifts, knowledge, and utterance. Surely, if the Lord sends a man to teach others, he will furnish him with the means. I believe many have intended well in setting up for preachers, who yet went beyond or before their call in so doing. The main difference between a minister and a private Christian seems to consist in these

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ministerial gifts, which are imparted to him, not for his own sake, but for the edification of others. But then I say, these are to appear in due season; they are not to be expected instantaneously, but gradually, in the use of proper means. They are necessary for the discharge of the ministry, but not necessary as pre-requisites to warrant our desires after it. In your case, you are young, and have time before you; therefore I think you need not as yet perplex yourself with inquiring if you have these gifts already: it is sufficient if your desire is sixed, and you are willing, in the way of prayer and diligence, to wait upon the Lord for them: as yet you need them not.

3. That which finally evidences a proper call is a correspondent opening in providence, by a gradual train of circumstances pointing out the means, the time, the place, of actually entering upon the work. And till this coincidence arrives, you mult not expect to be always clear from hesitation in your own mind. The principal caution on this head is, not to be too hafty in catching at first appearances. If it be the Lord's will to bring you into his ministry, he has already appointed your place and fervice; and though you know it not at present, you shall at a proper time. If you had the talents of an angel, you could do no good with them till his hour is come, and till he leads you to the people whom he has determined to bless by your means. It is very difficult to restrain ourselves within the bounds of prudence here; when our zeal

zeal is warm, a fense of the love of Christ upon our hearts, and a tender compassion for poor finners, is ready to prompt us to break out too foonbut he that believeth shall not make haste. I was about five years under this constraint : sometimes I thought I must preach, though it was in the streets. I listened to every thing that seemed plausible, and to many things that were not fo. But the Lord graciously, and as it were insensibly hedged up my way with thorns; otherwise, if I had been left to my own spirit, I should have put it quite out of my power to have been brought into fuch a sphere of usefulness, as he in his good time has been pleased to lead me to. And I can now see clearly, that at the time I would first have gone out, though my intention was, I hope, good in the main, yet I over-rated myfelf, and had not that spiritual judgment and experience, which are requisite for for great a fervice. I wish you therefore to take time : and if you have a defire to enter into the Established Church, endeavour to keep your zeal within moderate bounds, and avoid every thing that might unnecessarily clog your admission with difficulties. I would not have you hide your profession, or to be backward to speak for God; but avoid what looks like preaching, and be content with being a learner in the school of Christ for some years. " The delay. will not be loft time; you will be so much the more acquainted with the Gospel, with your own heart, and with human nature: the last is a necesfary branch of a minister's knowledge, and can only

be acquired by comparing what passes within us, and around us, with what we read in the word of God.

I am glad to find you have a distaste both for Arminian and Antinomian doctrines—but let not the mistakes of others sit too heavy upon you. Be thankful for the grace that has made you to dister; be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear; but beware of engaging in disputes, without evident necessity, and some probable hope of usefulness. They tend to eat out the life and savour of religion, and to make the soul lean and dry. Where God has begun a real work of grace, incidental mistakes will be lessened by time and experience; where he has not, it is of little signification what sentiments people hold, or whether they call themselves Arminians or Calvinists.

I agree with you, it is time enough for you to think of Oxford yet; and that if your purpose is fixed, and all circumstances render it prudent and proper to devote yourself to the ministry, you will do well to spend a year or two in private studies. It would be further helpful, in this view, to place yourself where there is Gospel preaching, and a lively people. If your favorable opinion of this place should induce you to come here, I shall be very ready to give you every assistance in my power. As I have trod exactly the path you seem to be setting out in, I might so far perhaps me more serviceable than those who are in other respects much



better qualified to affish you. I doubt not but in this, and every other step, you will intreat the Lord's direction; and I hope you will not forget to pray for,

Sir, your affectionate friend

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LETTER II.

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DEAR SIR,

Must beg you (once for all) to release me from any constraint about the length or frequency of my letters. Believe that I think of you, and pray for you when you do not hear from me. Your correspondence is not quite so large as mine, therefore you may write the oftener: your letters will be always welcome; and I will write to you when I find a leisure hour, and have any thing upon my mind to offer.

You feem fensible where your most observable failing lies, and to take reproof and admonition concerning it in good part; I therefore hope and believe the Lord will give you a growing victory over it. You must not expect habits and tempers. will be eradicated inflantaneously; but by perfeverance in prayer, and observation upon the experiences of every day, much may be done in time. Now and then you will (as is usual in the course of war) lose a battle; but be not discouraged, but. rally your forces, and return to the fight. There is a comfortable word; a leaf of the tree of life, for. healing the wounds we receive, in I John ii. I. If the enemy furprises you, and your heart smites, you, do not stand astonished as if there was no help, nor give way to forrow as if there was no hope, nor attempt to heal yourfelf; but away immediately ted

mediately to the throne of grace, to the great Phyfician, to the compassionate High Priest, and tell him all. Satan knows, that if he can keep us from confession our wounds will rankle; but do you prosit by David's experience, Ps. xxxii. 3—5. When we are simple and open-hearted in abasing ourselves before the Lord, though we have acted foolishly and ungratefully, he will seldom let us remain long without affording us a sense of his compassion; for he is gracious; he knows our frame, and how to bear with us, though we can hardly bear with ourselves or with one another.

The main thing is to have the heart right with God: this will bring us in the end fafely through many mistakes and blunders: but a double mind, a felfish spirit, that would halve things between God and the world, the Lord abhors. Though I have not yet had many opportunities of commending your prudence, I have always had a good opinion of your fincerity and integrity: if I am not mistaken in this, I make no doubt of your doing well. If the Lord is pleased to bless you, he will undoubtedly make you humble; for you cannot be either happy or fafe, or have any probable hope of abiding usefulness without it. I do not know that I have had any thing fo much at heart in my connections with you, as to impress you with a sense of the necessity and advantages of an humble frame of spirit: I hope it has not been in vain. O! to be little in our own eyes! this is the ground-work of every grace; this leads to a continual dependence upon the Lord Jefus; this is the spirit which he molina has

has promised to bless; this conciliates us good-will and acceptance amongst men; for he that abaseth himself is sure to be honored. And that this temper is so hard to attain and preserve is a striking proof of our depravity. For are we not finners? Were we not rebels and enemies before we knew the Gospel, and have we not been unfaithful, backfliding and unprofitable ever fince? Are we not redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and can we stand a fingle moment except he upholds us? Have we any thing which we have not received, or have we received any thing which we have not abused? Why then is dust and ashes proud?

I am glad you have found fome spiritual acquaintance in your barren land. I hope you will be helpful to them, and they to you. You do well to guard against every appearance of evil. If you are heartily for Jahrs, Satan owes you a grudge, One way or other he will try to cut you out work, and the Lord may fuffer him to go to the length of his chain. But though you are to keep your eye upon him, and expect to hear from him at every flep, you need not be flavishly afraid of him: for Jesus is stronger and wifer than he; and there is a complete fuit of armour provided for all who are engaged on the Lord's fide.

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LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

Concern for the perplexity you have met with, from objections which have been made against some expressions in my printed sermons, and in general against exhorting finners to believe in Jesus, engages me to write immediately; otherwise I should have waited a little longer; for we are now upon the point of removing to the vicarage, and I believe this will be the last letter I shall write from the old house. I shall chiefly confine myself at present to the subject you propose.

In the first place, I beg you to be upon your guard against a reasoning spirit. " Scarch the Scriptures; and where you can find a plain rule or warrant for any practice, go boldly on; and be not discouraged because you may not be clearly able to answer or reconcile every difficulty, that may either occur to your own mind or be put in your way. by others. Our hearts are very dark and narrow, and the very root of all apostacy is a proud disposition to question the necessity or propriety of divine appointments. But the child-like simplicity of faith is to follow God without reasoning; taking it for granted a thing must be right if he directs it, and charging all feeming inconfiftencies to the account of our own ignorance.

I suppose the people that trouble you upon this head are of two forts: rft. Those who preach upon Arminian

Arminian principles, and suppose a free will in man, in a greater or less degree, to turn to God when the Gospel is proposed. These, if you speak to finners at large, though they will approve of your doing fo, will take occasion perhaps to charge you with acting in contradiction to your own principles. Soit feems Mr. - has faid. I love and honor that man greatly, and I beg you will tell him fo from me; and tell him farther, that the reason why he is not a Calvinist is because he misapprehends our principles. If I had a proper call, I would undertake to prove the direct contrary; namely. that to exhort and deal plainly with finners, to ftir them up to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold of eternal life, is an attempt not reconcileable to fober reason upon any other grounds than those doctrines which we are called Calvinists for holding; and that all the absurdities which are charged upon us, as confequences of what we teach, are indeed truly chargeable upon those who differ from us in these points. I think this unanswerably proved by Mr. Edwards, in his discourse on the freedom of the will; though the chain of reasoning is so close, that few will give attention and pains to purfue it. As to myfelf, if I was not a Calvinist, I think I should have no more hope of success in preaching to men, than to horses or cows.

But these objections are more frequently urged by Calvinists themselves: many of them, I doubt not, good men, but betrayed into a curiosity of spirit, which often makes their ministry (if ministers) dry and inessicacious, and their conversation sour and unsavoury.

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unsavoury. Such a spirit is too prevalent in many professors, that if a man discovers a warm zeal for the glory of God, and is enabled to bear a faithful testimony to the Gospel truths; yea, though the Lord evidently bleffes him, they overlook all, and will undervalue a fermon, which upon the whole they cannot but acknowledge to be feriptural, if they meet with a fingle fentence contrary to the opinion they have taken up. I am forry to fee fuch a spirit prevailing. But this I observe, that the ministers who give into this way, though good men and good preachers in other respects, are seldom very useful or very zealous; and those who are, in private life, are more ready for dry points of difputation, at least harping upon a string of doctrines, than for experimental and heart-fearching converse, whereby one may warm and edify another. Bleffed be God, who has kept me and my people from this turn: if it should ever creep in or spread among us, I should be ready to write Ichahod upon our alfemblies.

I advise you therefore to keep close to the Bible and prayer: bring your difficulties to the Lord, and intreat him to give you and maintain in you a simple spirit. Search the Scripture. How did Peter deal with Simon Magus? We have no right to think worse of any who can hear us, than the Apostle did of him. He seemed almost to think his case desperate, and yet he advised him to repentance and prayer. Examine the same Apostle's discourse, Acts iii. and the close of St. Paul's sermon, Acts xiii. The power is all of God; the means are likewise

likewise of his appointment, and he always is pleased to work by fuch means as may fhew that the power is his. What was Moses's rod in itself, or the trumpets that threw down Jericho? What influence could the pool of Siloam have, that the eyes of the blind man by washing in it should be opened; or what could Ezekiel's feeble breath contribute to the making dry bones live? All these means were exceedingly difproportionate to the effect, but he who ordered them to be used accompanied them with his power. Yet if Moses had gone without his rod; if Joshua had slighted the ram's horns; if the prophet had thought it foolishness to speak to dry bones, or the blind man refused to wash his eyes, nothing could have been done. The fame holds good in the present subject: I do not reason, expostulate, and perfuade finners, because I think I can prevail with them, but because the Lord has commanded it. He directs me to address them as reasonable creatures; to take them by every handle; to fpeak to their consciences; to tell them of the terrors of the Lord, and of his tender mercies; to argue with them what good they find in fin, whether they do not need a Saviour; to put them in mind of death, judgment, and eternity, &c. When I have done all, I know it is to little purpose, except the Lord speaks to their hearts; and this to his own and at his own time I am fure he will, because he has promised it. See Isaiah lv. 10, 11. Matt. xxviii. 20. Indeed I have heard expressions in the warmth of delivery which I could not wholly approve, and therefore do not imitate. But in general. Tair

ral, I fee no preaching made very useful for the gathering of fouls, where poor finners are shut out of the discourse. I think one of the closest and most moving addresses to sinners I ever met with is in Dr. Owen's exposition of the 130th Psalm (in my edition) from p. 243 to 276. If you get it and examine it, I think you will find it all agreeable to Scripture; and he was a fleady, deep-fighted Calvinift. I wish you to study it well, and make it your pattern. He handles the same point likewife in other places, and fhews the weakness of the exceptions taken fomewhere at large, but I cannot just now find the passage. Many think themselves quite right, because they have not had their thoughts exercised at large, but have confined themselves to one track. There are extremes in every thing. I pray God to shew you the golden mean. The seed tool advantage and want they

trenta car be take then by every hance; to feel to their engleieness; to tell disea of the terrors of the Land of his tender correles; covered with then what field they find an they wire the things to not not a Surant; to pur men in thing of death, and ground, and describe, the Times death date all, I know it is easibile granued exercit the Lord spirite and their parment works on advers break and an Love over the self and serve he will entered behas promif and See Jaisely, To. Tr. Behr. outs it minificar as Stepheneral I Sephene 200 dillocat wiral glarier your boson to desire again told he dischare provential comments institution in the survey

Oct. 20, 1767. I am yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

I Would steal a few minutes here to write, lest I should not have leifure at home. I have not your letter with me, and therefore can only answer so far as I retain a general remembrance of the contents.

You will doubtless find rather perplexity than advantage from the multiplicity of advice you may receive, if you endeavour to reconcile and adobt the very different fentiments of your friends. I think it will be best to make use of them in a full latitude, that is, to correct and qualify them one by another, and to borrow a little from each without confining yourself entirely to any. You will probably be advised to different extremes, it will then be impossible to follow both, but it may be practicable to find a middle path between them: and I believe this will generally prove the best and fafest method. Only confult your own temper, and endeavour to incline rather to that fide to which you are the least disposed, by the ordinary frain of your own inclination, for on that fide you will be in the least danger of erring. Warm and hasty dispositions will seldom move too slow, and those who are naturally languid and cool are as little liable to over-act their part.

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With respect to the particulars you instance, I have generally thought you warm and enterprifing enough, and therefore thought it best to restrain you; but I meant only to hold you in, till you had acquired some farther knowledge and observation both of yourfelf and of others. I have the pleafure to hope (especially of late) that you are become more felf-diffident and wary than you was some time ago. And therefore as your years and time are advancing, and you have been for a tolerable space under a probation of silence, I can make no objection to your attempting fometimes to speak in select societies; but let your attempts be confined to fuch, I mean where you are acquainted with the people, or the leading part of them, and be upon your guard against opening yourself too much amongst strangers - and again, I earnestly defire you would not attempt any thing of this fort in a very public way, which may perhaps bring you under inconveniencies, and will be inconfistent with the part you ought to act (in my judgment) from the time you receive Episcopal ordination. You may remember a fimile I have fometimes used of green fruit: children are impatient to have it while it is green, but persons of more judgment will wait till it is ripe. Therefore I would wish your exhortations to be brief, private, and not very frequent. Rather give yourself to reading, meditation and prayer.

As to speaking without notes, in order to do it successfully, a fund of knowledge should be first possessed. Indeed in such societies as I hope you

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will confine your attempts to, it would not be practicable to use notes; but I mean, that if you defign to come out as a preacher without notes from the first, you must use double diligence in study: your reading must not be confined to the Scriptures; you should be acquainted with church history, have a general view of divinity as a system, know fomething of the state of controversies in past times and at prefent, and indeed of the general history of mankind. I do not mean that you should enter deeply into these things; but you will need to have your mind enlarged, your ideas increased, your stile and manner formed; you should read, think, write, compose, and use all diligence to exercise and strengthen your faculties. If you would speak extempore as a clergyman, you must be able to come off roundly, and to fill up your hour with various matter, in tolerable coherence, or else you will not be able to overcome the prejudice which usually prevails amongst the people. Perhaps it may be as well to use some little scheme in the note way, especially at the beginning; but a little trial will best inform you what is most expedient. meaning the state to the state of the vilent

Let your backwardness to prayer and reading the Scripture be ever so great, you must strive against it. This backwardness, with the doubts you speak of, are partly from your own evil heart, but perhaps chiefly temptations of Satan: he knows, if he can keep you from drawing water out of the wells of salvation he will have much advantage. My soul goes often mourning under the same complaints,

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but at times the Lord gives me a little victory. I hope he will over-rule all our trials, to make us more humble, dependent, and to give us tenderness of spirit towards the distressed. The exercised and experienced Christian, by the knowledge he has gained of his own heart, and the many difficulties he has had to struggle with, acquires a skill and compassion in dealing with others. And without such exercise, all our study, diligence, and gifts in other ways, would leave us much at a loss in some of the most important parts of our calling.

You have given yourself to the Lord for the ministry; his providence has thus far favoured your views; therefore harbour not a thought of flinching from the battle, because the enemy appears in view, but resolve to endure hardshop, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Lift up your banner in his name; trust in him, and he will support you; but above all things, be sure not to be either enticed or terrished from the privilege of a throne of grace.

Who your enemies are, or what they say, I know not, for I never conversed with them. Your friends here have thought you at times harsh and hasty in your manner, and rather inclining to self-confidence. These things I have often reminded you of, but I considered them as blemishes usually attendant upon youth, and which experience, temptation and prayer would correct. I hope and believe you will do well. You will have a share in my prayers and best advice, and when I see occasion to ofter a word of reproof, I shall not use any reserve.

August 30, 1770.

Yours.

LETTER V.

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DEAR SIR.

Am glad to hear you are accommodated at D—, where I hope your best endeavours will not be wanting to make yourself agreeable, by an humble,

inoffensive, and circumspect behaviour.

I greatly approve of your speaking from one of the lessons in the afternoon; you will find it a great help to bring you gradually to that habit and readiness of expression which you desire; and you will perhaps find it make more impression upon your hearers than what you read to them from the pulpit. However, I would not discourage or disfuade you from reading your fermons for a time. The chief inconvenience respecting yourself is that which you mention. A written fermon is something to lean upon, but it is best for a preacher to lean wholly upon the Lord. But fet off gradually; the Lord will not despise the day of finall things: pray heartily that your spirit may be right with him, and then all the rest will be well. And keep on writing: if you compole one fermon, and should find your heart enlarged to preach another, ftill. your labor of writing will not be loft. If your conscience bears you witness that you defire to serve the Lord, his promise (now he has brought you into the ministry) of a sufficiency and ability for the work belongs to you as much as to another. E 3 Your

Your borrowing help from others may arise from a diffidence of yourfelf, which is not blameable; but it may arise in part likewise from a diffidence of the Lord, which is hurtful. I wish you may get encouragement from that word, Exodus iv. 11, 12. It was a great encouragement to me. While I would prefs you to diligence in every rational means for the improvement of your stock in knowledge, and your ability of utterance, I would have you remember, that preaching is a gift. It cannot be learned by industry and imitation only, as a man may learn to make a chair or a table: it comes from above; and if you patiently wait upon God he will bestow this gift upon you, and increase it in you. It will grow by exercise. To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly. And be chiefly folicitous to obtain an unction upon what you do fay. Perhaps those fermons in which you feel yourfelf most deficient may be made most useful to others. I hope you will endeavour likewife to be plain and familiar in your language and manner (though not low or vulgar) fo as to fuit yourfelf as much as possible to the apprehensions of the most ignorant people. There are in all congregations fome persons exceedingly ignorant, yet they have precious fouls, and the Lord often calls fuch. I pray the Lord to make you wife to win fouls. I hope he will. You cannot be too jealous of your own heart, but let not fuch instances as Mr. ___ discourage you. Cry to him who is able to hold you up, that you may be fafe, and you shall not cry in vain. It is indeed an alarming thought

thought that a man may pray and preach, be useful and acceptable for a time, and yet be nothing. But still the soundation of God standeth sure. I have a good hope, that I shall never have cause to repent the part I have taken in your concerns. While you keep in the path of duty, you will find it the path of safety. Be punctual in waiting upon God in secret; this is the life of every thing, the only way and the sure way of maintaining and renewing your strength.

July 25, 1772.

I am yours.

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LETTER I.

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DEAR SIR,

June 29, 1757.

T Endeavour to be mindful of you in my prayers, that you may find both fatisfaction and fucces, and that the Lord himself may be your light, to discover to you every part of your duty. I would earnestly press you and myself to be followers of those who have been followers of Christ; to aim at a life of felf-denial; to renounce felf-will, and to guard against felf-wisdom. The less we have to do with the world the better; and, even in converfing with our brethren, we have been, and unless we watch and pray shall often be, ensnared. Time is precious, and opportunities once gone are gone for ever. Even by reading, and what we call studying, we may be comparatively losers. The shorter way is to be closely waiting upon God in humble, STREET OF MEET

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humble, secret, fervent prayer. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in his hands, and he gives bountifully without upbraiding. On the other hand, whatever we may undertake with a sincere desire to promote his glory, we may comfortably pursue: nothing is trivial that is done for him. In this view I would have you at proper intervals pursue your studies, especially at those times when you are unsit for better work. Pray for me, that I may be enabled to break through the snares of vanity that lie in my way; that I may be crucisted with Christ, and live a hidden life by faith in him who loved me and gave himself for me.

Adieu.

Dike Sin,

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DEAR SIR, August 31, 1757.

Wish you much of that spirit which was in the Apostle, which made him content to become all things to all men, that he might gain some. I am persuaded, that love and humility are the highest attainments in the school of Christ, and the brighest evidences that he is indeed our master. If any should seem inclined to treat you with less regard, because you are or have been a Methodist teacher, you will find forbearance, meekness, and long-fuffering, the most prevailing means to conquer their prejudices. Our Lord has not only taught us to expect perfecution from the world. though this alone is a trial too hard for flesh and blood, but we must look for what is much more grievous to a renewed mind, to be in some respects flighted, censured, and misunderstood, even by our Christian brethren; and that perhaps in cases where we are really striving to promote the glory of God and the good of fouls, and cannot, without the reproach of our consciences, alter our conduct, however glad we should be to have their approbation. Therefore we are required not only to refift the world, the flesh, and the devil, but likewise to bear one another's burdens; which plainly intimates there will be fomething to be borne with on all hands; and happy indeed is he that is not of-Month fended. fended. You may observe what unjust reports and furmifes were received, even at Jerusalem, concerning the Apostle Paul; and it feems he was condemned unheard, and that by many thousands too. All xxi. 20, 21; but we do not find he was at all ruffled, or that he fought to retort any thing upon them; though doubtlefs, had he been fo disposed. he might have found something to have charged them with in his turn; but he calmly and willingly complied with every thing in his power to foften and convince them. Let us be followers of this pattern, fo far as he was a follower of Christ; for even Christ pleased not himself. How did he bear with the mistakes, weakness, intemperate zeal, and imprudent proposals of his disciples while on earth; and how does he bear with the fame things from you and me, and every one of his followers now; and do we, can we think much to bear with each other for his fake? Have we all a full remiffion of ten thousand talents which we owed him, and were utterly unable to pay, and do we wrangle amongst ourselves for a few pence? God forbid!

If you should be numbered among the regular Independents, I advise you not to offend any of them by unnecessary singularities. I wish you not to part with any truth, or with any thing really expedient; but if the omitting any thing of an indifferent nature will obviate prejudices, and increase a mutual considence, why should not so easy a facrisice be made? Above all, my dear friend, let us keep close to the Lord in a way of prayer: he giveth wisdom that is profitable to direct:

direct; he is the wonderful counsellor; there is no teacher like him. Why do the living feek to the dead; why do we weary our friends and ourselves, in running up and down, and turning over books for advice? If we shut our eyes upon the world and worldly things, and raise our thoughts upwards in humility and filence, should we not often hear the fecret voice of the Spirit of God whifpering to our hearts, and pointing out to us the way of truth and peace? Have we not often gone aftray, and hurt either ourselves or our brethren. for want of attending to this divine instruction? Have we not fometimes mocked God, by pretending to ask direction from him, when we had fixed our determination before-hand? It is a great bleffing to know that we are fincere, and next to this to be convinced of our infincerity, and to pray against it.

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AN you forgive fo negligent a correspondent? I am indeed ashamed; but (if that is any good excuse) I use you no worse than my other friends. Whenever I write, I am obliged to begin with an apology; for what with business, and the incidental duties of every day, my time is always mortgaged before it comes into my hands, especially as I have fo little fkill in redeeming and improving it. I long to hear from you, and I long to fee you; and indeed from the terms of yours I expected you here before this, which has been partly a caufe of my delay. I have missaid your letter, and cannot remember the particulars; in general I remember you were well, and going on comfortably in your work, which was matter of joy to me; and my poor prayers are for you, that the Lord may own and prosper you more and more. The two great points we are called to pursue in this sinful, divided world, are peace and holiness: I hope you are much in the study of them. These are the peculiar characteristics of a disciple of Jesus; they are the richest part of the enjoyments of heaven; and fo far as they are received into the heart, they bring down heaven upon earth; and they are more inseparably connected between themselves than some of us are aware of. The longer I live, the more 1 fee

I fee of the vanity and the finfulness of our unchriftian disputes: they eat up the very vitals of religion. I grieve to think how often I have loft my time and my temper that way, in prefuming to regulate the vineyards of others, when I have neglected my own: when the beam in my own eye has fo contracted my fight, that I could difcern nothing but the mote in my neighbour's. I am now defirous to chuse a better part. Could I speak the publican's words with a proper feeling; I wish not for the tongue of men or angels to fight about notions or fentiments. I allow that every branch of Gospel truth is precious; that errors are abounding, and that it is our duty to bear an honest testimony to what the Lord has enabled us to find comfort in, and to instruct with meekness such as are willing to be instructed; but I cannot see it my duty, nay, I believe it would be my fin, to attempt to beat my notions into other people's heads. Too often I have attempted it in time past; but I now judge that both my zeal and my weapons were carnal. When our dear Lord questioned Peter, after his fall and recovery, he faid not, Art thou wife, learned, and eloquent? Nay, he faid not, Art thou clear, and found, and orthodox? But this only, Lovest thou me? An answer to this was fulficient then, why not now? Any other answer we may believe would have been infufficient then-If Peter had made the most pompous confession of his faith and fentiments, still the first question would have recurred, Lovest thou me? This is a scripture precedent. Happy the preacher, whoever

over he be, my heart and my prayers are with him, who can honeftly and steadily appropriate Peter's answer. Such a man, I say, I am ready to hear, though he should be as much mistaken in some points as Peter afterwards appears to have been in others. What a pity it is, that Christians in suceccding ages should think the constraining force of the love of Christ too weak, and suppose the end better answered by forms, subscriptions, and questions of their own devising. I cannot acquit even those churches who judge themselves nearest the primitive rule, in this respect: alas! will-worship and prefumption, may creep into the best external forms. But the misfortune both in churches and private Christians is, that we are too prone rather to compare ourselves with others, than to judge by the scriptures; and while each can see that they give not into the errors and mistakes of the oppofite party, both are ready to conclude that they are right: and thus it happens, that an attachment to a supposed Gospel order will recommend a man fooner and farther to some churches, than an eminency of Gospel practice. I hope you will beware of fuch a spirit whenever you publicly assume the Independent character: this, like a worm at the root, has nipt the graces, and hindered the usefulness of many a valuable man; and those who change fides and opinions are the most liable to it. For the pride of our heart infenfibly prompts us to cast about far and near for arguments to justify our own behaviour, and makes us too ready to hold the opinions we have taken up to the very extreme, that

that those amongst whom we are newly come may not suspect our fincerity. In a word, let us endeavour to keep close to God, to be much in prayer, to watch carefully over our hearts, and leave the busy, warm spirits to make the best of their work. The fecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and that wait on him continually to these he will shew his covenant, not notionally but experimentally. A few minutes of the Spirit's teaching will furnish us with more real, useful knowledge, then toiling through whole folios of commentators and expositors: they are useful in their places, and are not to be undervalued by those who can perhaps in general do better without them; but it will be our wisdom to deal less with the ftreams, and be more close in applying to the fountain head. The scripture itself and the spirit of God are the best and the only sufficient expositors of scripture. Whatever men have valuable in their writings, they got it from hence; and the way is as open to us as to any of them. There is nothing required but a teachable, humble spirit; and learning, as it is commonly called, is not necessary in order to this. I commend you to the grace of God, and remain

Your affectionate friend and fervant.

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DEAR SIR, 10, 1760.

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ear, and that wait on Have procured Cennick's fermons—they are in my judgment found and fweet. O that you and I had a double portion of that spirit and unction which is in them! Come, let us not despair; the fountain is as full and as free as ever-precious fountain, ever flowing with blood and water, milk and wine; this is the ftream that heals the wounded, refreshes the weary, fatishes the hungry, strengthens the weak, and confirms the ftrong; it opens the eyes of the blind, fostens the heart of stone, teaches the dumb to fing, and enables the lame and paralytic to walk, to leap, to run, to fly, to mount up with eagle's wings; a tafte of this ftream raifes earth to heaven, and brings down heaven upon earth. Nor is it a fountain only; it is a universal bleffing, and affumes a variety of shapes to fuit itself to our wants. It is a fun, a shield, a garment, a shade, a banner, a refuge: it is bread, the true bread, the very staff of life: it is life itself, immortal, eternal life!

> The cross of Jesus Christ, my Lord, Is food and medicine, shield and sword.

Take that for your motto; wear it in your heart; keep it in your eye; have it often in your mouth, till you can find something better. The cross of Christ MUTTAL

Christ is the tree of life and the tree of knowledge combined. Bleffed be God! there is neither prohibition nor flaming fword to keep us back, but it flands like a tree by the highway fide, which affords its shade to every passenger without distinction. Watch and pray; we live in a fifting time: error gains ground every day. May the name and love of our Saviour Jesus keep us and all his people. Either write or come very foon to cost enat sein foul profess, ar so ressive

these we know the grade of our Lord Jefus Christ a alor I are know how to try longthing about it, but how raint and tooks are our real perceptions of it. Our love to him is the price and mealing of what we know of his love to us. Surely that we are theer children in this kind of knowledge, and overy other land is vain. What flould we think of a man who finall neglect his bofiness, finelly, and all the conform of life, that he might fludy the Chinest language, though he knows beforepand he finally sever ee able to attain it, not ever tind occasion or apportunity to of it? The perfeit of every branch of knowledge that is not closely connected with the one thing receiful is no lefe

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LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

Nov. 15, 1760.

F your visit should be delayed, let me have a letter. I want either good news or good advice; to hear that your foul prospers, or to receive fomething that may quicken my own. The Apostle fays, ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: alas! we know how to fay fomething about it, but how faint and feeble are our real perceptions of it! Our love to him is the proof and measure of what we know of his love to us. Surely then we are meer children in this kind of knowledge, and every other kind is vain. What should we think of a man who should neglect his business, family, and all the comforts of life, that he might study the Chinese language; though he knows beforehand he should never be able to attain it, nor ever find occasion or opportunity to use it? The pursuit of every branch of knowledge that is not closely connected with the one thing needful is no less ridiculous.

You know something of our friend Mrs. B—. She has been more than a month confined to her bed, and I believe her next remove will be to her cossin. The Lord has done great things for her. Though she has been a serious, exemplary person all her life, when the prospect of death presented, she began to cry out earnestly, What shall I do to

be faved? But her solicitude is at an end; she has seen the salvation of God, and now for the most part rejoices in something more than hope. This you will account good news, I am sure. Let it be your encouragement and mine. The Lord's arm is not shortened, nor is his presence removed; he is near us still, though we perceive him not. May he guide you with his eye in all your public and private concerns, and may he in particular bless our communications to our mutual advantage.

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LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

July 29, 1761.

RE the quarrels made up? Tell those who know what communion with Jesus is worth, that they will never be able to maintain it, if they give way to the workings of pride, jealoufy, and anger. This will provoke the Lord to leave them dry; to command the clouds of his grace that they rain no rain upon them. These things are sure figns of a low frame, and a fure way to keep it fo. Could they be prevailed upon, from a fense of the pardoning love of God to their own fouls, to forgive each other as the Lord forgives us, freely, fully, without condition and without referve, they would find this like breaking down a stone wall, which has hitherto shut up their prayers from the Lord's ears, and shut out his bleffing from filling their hearts. Tell them, I hope to hear that all animofities, little and big, are buried by mutual consent in the Redeemer's grave. Alas! the people of God have enemies enough: why then will they weaken their own hands? Why will they help their-enemies to pull down the Lord's work? Why will they grieve those who wish them well, cause the weak to stumble, the wicked to rejoice, and bring a reproach upon their holy profession. Indeed this is no light matter; I wish it may not lead them to fomething worse; I wish they may be wife

wife in time, lest Satan gains further advantage over them, and draw them to fomething that shall make them (as David did) roar under the pains of broken bones. But I must break off. May God give you wisdom, faithfulness and patience: take care that you do not catch an angry spirit yourself, while you aim to suppress it in others: this will spoil all, and you will exhort, advise, and weep in vain. May you rather be an example and pattern to the flock; and in this view be not furprifed if you yourfelf meet some hard usage; rather rejoice, that you will thereby have an opportunity to exemplify your own rules, and to convince your people. that what you recommend to them you do not fpeak by rote, but from the experience of your heart. One end why our Lord was tempted was for the encouragement of his poor followers, that they might know him to be a High Priest suited to them, having had a fellow-feeling in their diffresses. For the like reason he appoints his ministers to be forely exercised both from without and within, that they may sympathize with their flock, and know in their own hearts the deceitfulness of fin, the infirmities of the flesh, and the way in which the Lord supports and bears with all that trust him. Therefore be not discouraged; usefulness and trials, comforts and crosses, strength and exercise go together. But remember he has faid, I will never leave thee nor forfake thee; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. When you get to heaven, you will not complain of the way by which the Lord brought you. Farewell. Pray for us. Vol. II. Yours.

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DEAR SIR, Dec. 14, 1761.

Pray the Lord to accompany you, but cannot help fearing you go on too fast. If you have not (as I am fure you ought not) made an absolute promife, but only conditional, you need not be fo folicitous; depend upon it, when the Lord is pleafed to remove you he will fend one to supply your place. I am grieved that your mind is so set upon a Rep, which I fear will occasion many inconveniences to a people who have deferved your best regard. Others may speak you fairer, but none wishes you better than myfelf; therefore I hope you allow me to speak my mind plainly, and believe that it is no pleasure to me to oppose your inclinations. As to your faying they will take no denial, it has no weight with me. Had they asked what you were exceedingly averse to, you would soon have exprefled yourfelf fo as to convince them it was to no purpose to urge you; but they faw something in your manner or language that encouraged them; they faw the proposal was agreeable to you, that you were not at all unwilling to exchange your old friends for new ones; and this is the reason they would take no denial. If you should live to see those who are most forward in pressing you become the first to discourage you, you will think seriously of my words.

If I thought my advice would prevail, it should be this: Call the people together, and desire them (if possible) to forget you ever intended to depart from them; and promise not to think of a removal, till the Lord shall make your way so clear, that even they shall have nothing reasonable to object against it. You may keep your word with your other friends too; for when a proper person shall offer, as likely to please and satisfy the people as yourself, I will give my hearty consent to your removal.

Consider what it is you would have in your office, but maintenance, acceptance, and success. Have you not those where you are? Are you sure of having them where you are going? Are you sure the Spirit of God (without which you will do nothing) will be with you there, as he has been with you hitherto? Perhaps if you act in your own spirit, you may find as great a change as Sampson. I am ready to weep when I think what difficulties were surmounted to accomplish your ordination; and now when the people thought themselves fixed, that you should so soon disappoint them.

Yours, &c.

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If I thought my advice would prevail, it flouid. be this. Call the ecople together, and defire them (if politile) to forget you ever intended to depair

DEAR SIR, 1762.

T Have been often thinking of you fince your removal, and was glad to receive your letter today. I hope you will still go on to find more and more encouragement to believe, that the Lord has disposed and led you to the step you have taken. For though I wrote with the greatest plainness and earnestness, and would if in my power have prevented it while under deliberation, yet now it is done and past recall I would rather help than difhearten you. Indeed I cannot fay that my view of the affair is yet altered. The best way not to be cast down hereafter is not to be too sanguine at first. You know there is fomething pleafing in novelty; as yet you are new to them, and they to you: I pray God that you may find as cordial a regard from them as at prefent, when you have been with them as many years as in the place you came from. And if you have grace to be watchful and prayerful, all will be well; for we serve a gracious Master, who knows how to overrule even our mistakes to his glory and our own advantage. Yet I observe that when we do wrong, fooner or later we fmart for our indifcretion; perhaps many years afterwards. After we have seen and confessed our fault, and received repeated proofs of pardoning love, as to the guilt, yet chaftisement, to remind us more sensibly of our having done amifs, will generally find us out. So it was with David in the matter of Uriab: the Lord put away his fin, healed his broken bones, and restored unto him the light of his countenance; yet many troubles, in confequence of this affair, followed one upon another, till at length (many years afterwards) he was driven from Jerufalem by his own fon. So it was with Tacob: he dealt deceitfully with his brother Efau; notwithstanding this the Lord appeared to him and bleffed him, gave him comfortable promifes, and revealed himfelf to him from time to time; yet after an interval of twenty years his fault was brought afresh to his remembrance, and his heart trembled within him when he heard his brother was coming with armed men to meet him. And thus I have found it in my own experience: things which I had forgotten a long while have been brought to my mind by providential dispensations which I little expected, but the first rise of which I have been able to trace far back, and forced to confess, that the Lord is indeed He that judgeth the heart and trieth the reins. I hint this for your caution: you know best upon what grounds you have proceeded; but if, (though I do not affirm it, I hope otherwise), I say, if you have acted too much in your own spirit, been too hafty and precipitate; if you have not been fufficiently tender of your people, nor thoughtful of the confequences which your departure will probably involve them in; if you were impatient under the Lord's hand, and instead of waiting his time and way of removing the trials and difficulties you F 3 found.

found, you have ventured upon an attempt to free and mend yourfelf: I fay, if any of these things have mixed with your determinations, fomething will fall out to shew you your fault : either you will not find the fuccess you hope for, or friends will grow cold, or enemies and difficulties you dream not of will present themselves, or your own mind will alter, fo as what feems now most pleasing will afford you little pleasure. Yet though I write thus, I do not mean (as I faid before) to discourage you, but that you may be forewarned, humble, and watchful. If you should at any time have a different view of things, you may take comfort from the instances I have mentioned. The trials of David and Jacob were sharp, but they were short, and they proved to their advantage, put them upon acts of humiliation and prayer, and ended in a double bleffing. Nothing can harm us that quickens our earnestness and frequency in applying to a throne of grace? only trust the Lord and keep close to him, and all that befalls you shall be for good. Temptations end in victory; troubles prove an increase of consolation; yea, our very falls and failings tend to increase our spiritual wisdom, to give us a greater knowledge of Satan's devices, and make us more habitually upon our guard against them. Happy case of the believer in Jesus ! when bitten by the fiery ferpent he needs not go far for a remedy; he has only to look to a bleeding Saviour, and be healed.

I think one great advantage that attends a removal into a new place is, that it gives an eafy opportu-.burnol

nity of forming a new plan, and breaking off any little habits which we have found inconvenient, and yet perhaps could not so readily lay aside, where our customs and acquaintance had been long formed. I earnestly recommend to you to reflect, if you cannot recollect fome things which you have hitherto omitted, which may properly be now taken up; fome things formerly allowed, which may now with ease and convenience be laid aside. I only give the hint in general, for I have nothing in particular to charge you with. I recommend to you to be very choice of your time, especially the fore part of the day: let your morning hours be devoted to prayer, reading and fludy, and fuffer not the importunity of friends to rob you of the hours before noon, without a just necessity: and if you accustom yourfelf to rife early in the morning, you will find a great advantage. Be careful to avoid lofing your thoughts, whether in books or otherwife, upon any subjects which are not of a direct subserviency to your great defign, till towards dinner time: the afternoon is not so favourable to study; this is a proper time for paying and receiving visits, converfing among your friends, or unbending with a book of instructive entertainment, such as history, &c. which may increase your general knowledge, without a great confinement of your attention; but let the morning hours be facred. I think you would likewise find advantage in using your pen more: write short notes upon the scriptures you read, or transcribe the labours of others; make extracts from your favorite authors, especially those FA who,

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who, befides a fund of spiritual and evangelical matter, have a happy talent of expressing their thoughts in a clear and lively, or pathetic manner? you would find a continued exercise in this way would be greatly useful to form your own stile, and help your delivery and memory; you would become infensibly mafter of their thoughts, and find it more easy to express yourself justly and clearly: what we only read we easily lose, but what we commit to paper is not fo foon forgot. Especially remember, (what you well know, but we cannot too often remind each other), that frequent fecret prayer is the life of all we do. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given; but all our diligence will fail if we are remifs in this particular. I am glad it is not thought necessary for you to go to London on this occasion. I hope you will not think it necessary upon any other account. Rather keep close to the work you have undertaken, and Endeavour to avoid any thing that looks like oftentation, or a defire to be taken notice of. You fee I advise you with the freedom of a friend who loves you, and longs to fee your work and your foul profper.

You will, I doubt not, endeavour to promote the practice of frequent prayer in the houses that receive you. I look upon prayer meetings as the most profitable exercises (excepting the public preaching) in which Christians can engage: they have a direct tendency to kill a worldly, trisling spirit, to draw down a divine blessing upon all our concerns, compose differences, and enkindle (at least

least to maintain) the flame of divine love amongst brethren. But I need not tell you the advantages; you know them; I only would exhort you, and the rather, as I find in my own case the principal cause of my leanness and unfruitfulness is owing to an unaccountable backwardness to pray. I can write, or read, or converse, or hear with a ready will; but prayer is more spiritual and inward than any of these; and the more spiritual any duty is, the more my carnal heart is apt to start from it. May the Lord pour forth his precious spirit of

prayer and supplication in both our hearts.

I am not well pleased with the account you give of so many dry bones. It increases my wonder, that you could so readily exchange so much plump flesh and blood as you had about you for a parcel of skeletons. I wish they may not haunt you and disturb your peace. I wish these same dry bones do not prove thorns in your fides and in your eyes. You fay, now you have to pray, and prophecy, and wait for the four winds to come and put life into these bones. God grant that your prayers may be answered; but if I knew a man who possessed a field in a tolerable soil, which had afforded him some increase every year, and if this man, after having bestowed seven years labour in cultivating, weeding, manuring, fencing, &c. just when he has brought his ground (in his neighbours judgment) into good order, and might reasonably hope for larger crops than he had ever yet feen, should fuddenly forego all his advantages, leave his good feed for the birds to eat, pull up the young fences which

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which cost him so much pains to plant, and all this for the fake of making a new experiment upon the top of a mountain; though I might heartily with him great success, I could not honestly give him great encouragement. You have parted with that for a trifle, which in my eyes feems an inestimable jewel; I mean the hearts and affections of an enlightened people. This appears to me one of the greatest honours and greatest pleasures a faithful minister can posses, and which many faithful and eminent ministers have never been able to obtain. This gave you a vast advantage; your gift was more acceptable there than that of any other person, and more than you will probably find elfewhere, For I cannot make a comparison between the hasty approbation of a few, whole eyes are but beginning to open, and their affections and passions warm, so that they must if possible have the man that first catches their attention; I fay, I cannot think this worthy to be compared to the regard of a people who understood the Gospel, were able to judge of men and doctrines, and had trial of you for so many years. It is indeed much to your honour (it proves that you were faithful, diligent, and exemplary), that the people proved fo attached to you; but that you fhould force yourself from them, when they so dearly loved you and so much needed you, this has made all your friends in these parts to wonder, and your enemies to rejoice; and I, alas! know not what to answer in your behalf to either. Say not, I hate this Micaiah, for be prophecies not good of me, but evil, but allow me the privilege of a friend. My doidso

My heart is full when I think of what has happened, and what will probably be the consequence. In few words, I am strongly persuaded you have taken an unadvised step, and would therefore prepare you for the inconvenience and uneasiness you may probably meet with. And if I am (as I desire I may prove) mistaken, my advice will do no harm; you will want something to balance the caresses and success you meet with.

We should be very glad to see you, and hope you will take your measures when you do come to lengthen your usual stay, in proportion to the disference of the distance. Pray for us.

I am yours.

THE REVIEW My heart is full useen I shook of what has hale paned, and white will probably be the configuration. la ferre se test et am Councils perfunded year have est; swinger the new one went there we street our you for the ingert endence and narrical you mar appropriate Land if Land is Land propriation times or obline beliefer, or added on the ment you will want for athling to believe the caselles and and the graph of the gladett for the graph and the state the service on their middle even when their establishment And all an neutropying in part habit often carried to the catheren Tier for all a remained attraction I was a supplied to the state of The second process all the second to be a second to Selection to the Property of Agencies to the Control of the Contro Appendix to their Appendix to a party to The last means the company of the first of the company of the weetlers in the spanish of the third legel of the green, like is don't be to be a first Control of the contro that the property production is the second of the second o A Secretaria de la compania del compania del compania de la compania del la compania de la compa Law Corner Constitute to the Market Constitute of the Constitute o Bulletine Court

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My DEAR MADAM,

T Have had fudden notice that I may fend you a L hasty line, to express our satisfaction in hearing that you had a safe, though perilous journey. I hope I shall be always mindful to pray, that the Lord may guide, bless, and comfort you, and give you fuch a manifestation of his person, power, and grace, as may fet you at liberty from all fear, and fill you with abiding peace and joy in believing. Remember that Jesus has all power, the fulness of compassion, and embraces with open arms all that come to him for life and falvation

I know not whether Mrs. --- 's illness was before or fince my last. Through mercy she is better again, and I remain fo, though death and illness are still walking about the town. O for molAsia

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grace to take warning by the fufferings of others, and fet loofe to the world, and fo number our days as to incline our hearts to the one thing needful: indeed that one thing includes many things, fufficient to engage the best of our thoughts and the most of our time, if we were duly sensible of their importance; but I may adopt the Pfalmist's expresfion, My foul cleaveth to the duft. How is it that the truths of which I have the most undoubted conviction, and which are of all others the most weighty, should make so little impression upon me? O I know the cause! It is deeply rooted. An evil nature cleaves to me; fo that when I would do good, evil is present with me. It is however a mercy to be made sensible of it, and in any measure humbled for it. Ere long it will be dropt it the grave; then all complaints shall cease. That thought gives relief. I shall not always live this poor dying life: I hope one day to be all ear, all heart, all tongue; when I shall fee the Redeemer as he is, I shall be like him. This will be a heaven indeed, to behold his glory without a veil, to rejoice in his love without a cloud, and to fing his praises without one jarring or wandering note for ever. In the mean time, may he enable us to ferve him with our best. O that every power, faculty and talent, were devoted to him! He deferves all we have, and ten thousand times more if we had it; for he has loved us, and washed us from our fins in his own blood. He gave himself for us. In one fense we are well suited to answer his purpose; for if we were not vile and worthless beyond expreffion, 50012

pression, the exceeding riches of his grace would not have been so gloriously displayed. His glory shines more in redeeming one sinner, than in preserving a thousand angels. Poor Mr. —— is still in the dark valley, but we trust prayer shall yet bring him out. Mighty things have been done in answer to prayer, and the Lord's arm is not shortened, neither is his ear heavy. It is our part to wait till we have an answer. One of his own hymns says,

The promise may be long deferr'd, But never comes too late.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Mr. T of R This is apparently a heavy blow. He was an amiable, judicious, candid man, and an excellent preacher in a great fphere of ufefulness; and his age and constitution gave hopes that he might have been eminently ferviceable for many years. How often does the Lord write Vanity upon all our expectations from men. He visited a person ill of a putrid fever, and carried the feeds of infection with him to London, where he died. Mrs. - is a very excellent and accomplished woman, but exceedingly delicate in her frame and spirits. How can she bear so sudden and fevere a stroke! But yet I hope she will afford a proof of the Lord's all-sufficiency and faithfulness, O Madam, the Lord our God is a great God! If he frowns, the smiles of the whole creation can afford no comfort; and if he is pleased to smile, he can enable the foul under the darkest dispensations to say,

All is well. Yet the flesh will feel, and it ought; otherwise the exercise of faith, patience and resignation would be impracticable. I have lost in him one of my most valued and valuable friends: but what is my loss to that of his people!

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord increase you more and more, you and your children. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you his peace. I thank him for leading you to us, but especially for making your visit there in any measure agreeable and profitable to yourself. If I have been an instrument in his hand for your comfort, I have reason to remember it among the greatest favours he has conferred upon me. And now, dear Madam, once more farewell. If the Lord spares our lives, I hope we shall see each other again upon earth. But above all let us rejoice in the blessed Gospel, by which immortality is brought to light, and a glorious prospect opened beyond the grave.

There fits our Saviour thron'd in light, Cloth'd with a body like our own.

There at least, after all the changes and trials of this state, we shall meet to part no more.

May, 1774. I am yours, &c.

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LETTER II.

time and the lift correct the Creenland.

My DEAR MADAM,

I Should have been more uneafy at being prevented writing immediately, had I any reason to apprehend my advice necessary upon the point you propose, which by this time I suppose is settled as it should be without me. I smiled at Miss M—'s disappointment. However, if the Lord savors her with a taste for the library of my proposing, she will be like the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, and will count all other books but pebbles in comparison of those four volumes, which present us with something new and important whenever we look into them. I shall be much obliged to her if she will commit the third chapter of Proverbs to her memory, and I shall pray the Lord to write it in her heart.

You surprise me when you tell me, that the incident of my birth-day was noticed by those I never saw. Be so good as to return my thanks to my unknown friends, and tell them, that I pray our common Lord and Saviour to bless them abundantly. His people while here are scattered abroad, separated by hills and rivers, and too often by names and prejudices; but by and by we shall all meet where we shall all know and acknowledge each other, and rejoice together for evermore. I have lately read with much pleasure, and I hope with some

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fome profit, the history of the Greenland Mission. Upon the whole it is a glorious work. None who love the Lord will refuse to say, it is the finger of God indeed. For my own part, my soul rejoices in it, and I honour the instruments, as men who have hazarded their lives in an extraordinary manner for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Sure I am that none could have sustained such discouragements at first, or have obtained such success afterwards unless the Lord had sent, supported, and owned them.

I hope we shall have an interest in your prayers, I trust the Lord is yet with us. We have some ripe for the sickle, and some just springing up; some tokens of his gracious presence amongst us; but sin and Satan cut us out abundance of work as individuals, though through mercy as a society we walk it peace.

The toad and spider is an exhibition of my daily experience. I am often wounded, but the Lord is my health. Still I am a living monument of mercy, and I trust that word, Because I live you shall live also, will carry me to the end. I am poor, weak, and foolish; but Jesus is wife, strong and abounding in grace. He has given me a defire to trust my all in his hands, and he will not disappoint the expectation which he himself has raised. At present I have but little to say, and but little time to fay it in. When you think of this place, I hope you will think and believe, that you have friends here most cordially interested in your welfare, and often remembering you in prayer. May the ORIGI

the Lord be your guide and shield, and give you the best desires of your heart. I pray him to establish and settle you in the great truths of his word. I trust he will. We learn more and more effectually, by one minute's communication with him, through the medium of his written word, than we could from an assembly of divines or a library of books.

laifure bour; but affirm on demanding .2771 ni laifure bour; but affirm of daily occurrence have have hear to many and fo proffing, that I have been continued to but it off this now. I trust the Loud, by it been continued to but it off this been continued to by it for and profession of pour children. I define a view of her callarges to be at tall as fer his new its firm and the increases in grave and from the pour firm and that the continued and from the continued of the mand that was a series and from the continued of the mand that was a series and from the best of the angle of the continued of the mand that was continued to be one of the mand that which continued as and from the continued and the mand that continued as a series and from the continued as a series and from the continued as a series and from the continued as a series and for the continued as a series and from the continued as a series and for th

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LETTER III.

My DEAR MADAM,

This not owing to forgetfulness that your letter has been thus long unanswered. It has lain within my view this fortnight, demanding my first leisure hour; but affairs of daily occurrence have been so many and so pressing, that I have been constrained to put it off till now. I trust the Lord, by his Spirit and providence, will direct and prosper the settlement of your children. I desire my love to Miss M——. My idea of her enlarges. Methinks I see her aspiring to be as tall as her Mamma. I hope likewise that she increases in grace and wisdom as in years and stature; and that hearing our Lord's slock is a little flock, she feels an earnest thirst to be one of the happy number which constitutes his fold.

"There the Lord dwells amongst them upon his own hill, With the flocks all around him awaiting his will."

If she has such a desire, I can tell who gave it her, for I am persuaded it was not born with her; and where the good husbandman sows, there will he also reap. Therefore, dear Miss M——, press forward: knock, and it shall be opened unto you, for yet there is room. O what a fold! O what a pasture! O what a shepherd! Let us love, and sing, and wonder.

I hope

I hope the good people at Bristol, and every where else, are praying for our finful, distracted land, in this dark day. The Lord is angry, the fword is drawn, and I am afraid nothing but the spirit of wrestling prayer can prevail for the returning it into the scabbard. Could things have proceeded to these extremities, except the Lord had withdrawn his falutary bleffing from both fides? It is a time of prayer. We fee the beginning of trouble, but who can foresee the possible consequences? The fire is kindled, but how far it may fpread those who are above may perhaps know better than we. I meddle not with the disputes of party. nor concern myself with any political maxims, but fuch as are laid down in scripture. There I read that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that fin is the reproach, and if perfifted in, the ruin, of any people. Some people are startled at the enormous fum of our national debt: they who understand spiritual arithmetic may be well startled, if they sit down and compute the debt of national fin. Imprimis, infidelity: item, contempt of the Gospel: item, the profligacy of manners: item, perjury: item, the cry of blood, the blood of thousands, perhaps millions, from the East-Indies. It would take sheets, yea quires, to draw out the particulars under each of these heads, and then much would remain untold. What can we answer, when the Lord faith, Shall not I visit for these things? Shall not my foul be avenged on fuch a nation as this? Since we received the news of the first hostilities in America, we have had an additional prayer

prayer meeting. Could I hear that professors in general, instead of wasting their breath in cenfuring men and meafures, were plying the throne of grace, I should still hope for a respite. Poor New England! once the glory of the earth, now likely to be vifited with fire and fword. They have left their first love, and the Lord is forely contend. ing with them. Yet furely their fins as a people are not to be compared with ours. I am just so much affected with these things as to know, that I am not affected enough. Oh! my spirit is fadly cold and infensible, or I should lay them to heart in a different manner: yet I endeavour to give the alarm as far as I can. There is one political maxim which comforts me, the Lord reigns. His hand guides the ftorm, and he knows them that are his, how to protect, support and deliver them. He will take care of his own cause, yea, he will extend his kingdom, even by these formidable methods. Men have one thing in view, he has another, and his counsel shall stand.

The chief piece of news fince my last is concerning B. A. She has finished her course, and is now with the great multitude, who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of his teltimony. Tuesday, the first of February, she was in our assembly, was taken ill the next day, and died while we were assembled the Tuesday following. She had an easy dissolution, retained her senses and her speech till the last minute, and went without a struggle or a sigh. She was not in raptures during her illness, but was composed, and maintained

maintained a strong and lively faith. She had a numerous levee about her bed daily, who were all witnesses to the power of faith, and to the faithfulness of the Lord, enabling her to triumph over the approaches of death; for the was well known and well respected. She will be much missed, but I hope he will answer the many prayers she put up for us, and raise up others in her room. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Bleffed are they who know whom they have believed, and when death comes can chearfully reft their hopes on him who died that we might live. B-had been long a precious and honorable woman, but her hope in the trying hour rested not in what she had done for the Lord, but upon what he had done for her; not upon the change his grace had wrought in her, but upon the righteousness he had wrought out for her by his obedience unto death. This supported her, for the faw nothing in herfelf but what the was ashamed of. She saw reason to renounce her own goodness, as well as her own fins, as to the point of acceptance with God, and died as St. Paul lived. determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

The time when Mr. and Mrs. C— remove to Scotland drawing near, Mrs. — is gone to spend a week or two with them, and take her leave. She feels something at parting with a sister, who is indeed a valuable person; and from children they have always lived in the most tender intimacy and uninterrupted friendship. But all beneath the moon (like the moon itself) is subject to incessant change.

Vol. II. G Alterations

Alterations and separations are graciously appointed of the Lord, to remind us that this is not our reft. and to prepare our thoughts for that approaching change which shall fix us for ever in an unchange. able state. O Madam, what shall we poor worms render to him who has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, taken away the sting of death, revealed a glorious prospect beyond the grave, and given us eyes to see it? Now the reflection that we must ere long take a final farewell of what is most capable of pleasing us upon earth is not only tolerable, but pleasant. For we know we cannot fully possess our best friend, our chief treasure, till we have done with all below: nay, we cannot till then properly see each other. We are cased up in vehicles of clay, and converse together as if we were in different coaches with the blinds close drawn round. We see the carriage, and the voice tells us that we have a friend within : but we shall know each other better, when death shall open the coach doors, and hand out the company fuccesfively, and lead them into the glorious apartments which the Lord has appointed to be the common residence of them that love him. What an affembly will there be! What a constellation of glory, when each individual shall shine like the fun in the kingdom of their Father! No fins, forrows, temptations; no veils, clouds, or prejudices, shall interrupt us then. All names of idle diffinction (the fruits of present remaining darkness, the channels of bigotry, and the stumbling block of the world,) will be at an end. The

The description you give of your present residence pleases me much, and chiefly because it describes and manifests to me something still more interesting; I mean the peaceable fituation of your mind. Had he placed you in an Eden fome months ago, it would hardly have awakened your descriptive talent. But he whom the winds and feas obey has calmed your mind, and I trust will go on to fill you with all joy and peace in believing. It is no great matter where we are, provided we see that the Lord has placed us there, and that continued that his stoller he is with us. August 1775. I am, Madam, yours.

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LETTER IV.

O, my dear Madam, I hope we have found you out, and that this letter will reach you in good time, to welcome you in our names to London. We are ready to take it for granted that you will now most certainly make us a visit. Do come as foon, and fray as long as you possibly can. Methinks you will be glad to get out of the fmell and noise as soon as possible. If we did not go to London now and then, we should perhaps forget how people live there. Especially I pity professors; they are exposed to as many dangers as people who live in mines; chilling damps, fcorching blafts, epidemical disorders, owing to the impure air. Such are the winds of false doctrines, the explofions of controversy, the blights of worldly conversation, the contagion of evil custom. In short, a person had need have a good constitution of grace, and likewise to be well supplied with antidotes, to preserve a tolerable share of spiritual health in fuch a fituation.

And now, how shall I fill up the rest of the paper? It is a shame for a Christian and a minister to say he has no subject at hand, when the inexhaustible theme of redeeming love is ever pressing upon our attention. I will tell you then, though you know it, that the Lord reigns. He who once bore our sins and carried our forrows is seated upon a throne of glory, and exercises all power in heaven

and on earth. Thrones, principalities and powers, bow before him. Every event in the kingdoms of Providence and of grace are under his rule. His Providence pervades and manages the whole, and is as minutely attentive to every part as if there were only that fingle object in his view. From the tallest archangel to the meanest ant or fly, all depend on him for their being, their preservation and their powers. He directs the sparrows where to build their nests and to find their food. He overrules the rife and fall of nations, and bends with an invincible energy and unerring wisdom all events; for that while many intend nothing less, in the iffue their defigns all concur and coincide in the accomplishment of his holy will. He restrains with a mighty hand the still more formidable efforts of the powers of darkness; and Satan with all his hosts cannot exert their malice a hair's breadth beyond the limits of his permission. This is he who is the head and husband of his believing people. How happy are they whom it is his good pleafure to blefs! How fafe are they whom he has engaged to protect! How honored and privileged are they to whom he is pleased to manifest himself, and whom he enables and warrants to claim him as their friend and their portion! Having redeemed them by his own blood, he fets a high value upon them; he esteems them his treasure, his jewels, and keeps them as the pupil of his eye. They shall not want, they need not fear: his eye is upon them in every fituation, his ear his open to their prayers, and his everlasting arms are under them for their sure sup-G 3 port.

port. On earth he guides their steps, controls their enemies, and directs all his dispensations for their good; while in heaven he is pleading their cause, preparing them a place, and communicating down to them reviving foretastes of the glory that shall be shortly revealed. O how is this mystery hidden from an unbelieving world. Who can believe it, till it is made known by experience, what an intercourse is maintained in this land of shadows between the Lord of glory and sinful worms! How should we praise him that he has visited us, for we were once blind to his beauty and insensible to his love, and should have remained so to the last, had he not prevented us with his goodness, and been sound of us when we fought him not.

Mrs. --- presents her love. The bite of the leach which I mentioned to you has confined her to the house ever fince, but I hope she will be able to go out to-morrow. We were for a while apprehenfive of worse consequences, but the Lord is gracious: he shews us in a variety of instances what dependent creatures we are, how blind to events, and how eafily the methods which we take to relieve ourselves from a small inconvenience may plunge us into a greater. Thus we learn (happy indeed if we can effectually learn it) that there is no fafety but in his protection, and that nothing can do us good but by his bleffing. As for myfelf, I fee fo many reasons why he might contend with me, that I am amazed he affords me and mine fo much peace, and appoints us so few trials. We live as upon a field of battle; many are hourly fuffering Dick.

fuffering and falling around us, and I can give no reason why we are preserved, but that he is God and not man. What a mercy that we are only truly known to him who is alone able to bear us!

May the Lord bless you and yours; may he comfort you, guide you, and guard you. Come quickly to

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Your affectionate servant.

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LETTERS

TO

THE REV. MR. B----

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LETTER I.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

TTHEN I was at London in June last your name first reached me, and from that time I have been desirous to wish you success in the name of the Lord. A few weeks ago I received a further account from Mrs. -, with a volume of your fermons: she likewise gave me adirection where to write, and an encouragement that a letter would not be unacceptable. The letter indeed I did not much need, when I had read your book. Though we have no acquaintance, we are already united in the strictest ties of friendship, partakers of the same hope, fervants of the same Lord, and in the same part of his vineyard: I therefore hold all apologies needless. I rejoice in the Lord's goodness to you; G 6 I pray

I pray for his abundant bleffing upon your labours; I need an interest in our prayers; I have an affectionate desire to know more concerning you: these

are my motives for writing.

Mrs. —— tells me that you have read my Narrative: I need not tell you therefore, that I am one of the most astonishing instances of the forbearance and mercy of God upon the face of the earth. In the close of it I mention a warm defire I had to the ministry: this the Lord was pleased to keep alive for feveral years, through a fuccession of views and disappointments. At length his hour came, and my way was made easy. I have been here about fifteen months. The Lord has led me by a way that I little expected to a pleafant lot, where the Gospel has been many years known, and is highly valued by many. We have a large church and congregation, and a confiderable number of lively, thriving believers, and in general go on with great comfort and harmony. I meet with less opposition from the world than is usual where the Gospel is preached. This burthen was borne by Mr. B --- for ten years, and in that course of time fome of the fiercest opposers were removed, fome wearied, and fome foftened, fo that we are now remarkably quiet in that respect. May the Lord teach us to improve the privilege, and preferve us from indifference. How unspeakable are our obligations to the grace of God! What a privilege is it to be a believer! They are comparatively few, and we by nature were no nearer than others;

others; it was grace, free grace, that made the difference. What an honor to be a minister of the everlasting Gospel! These upon comparison are perhaps fewer still. How wonderful that one of these few should be fought for among the wilds of Africa. reclaimed from the lowest state of impiety and mifery, and brought to affure other finners, from his own experience, that there is, there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared. And you, Sir, though not left to give fuch flagrant proofs of the wickedness of the heart and the power of Satan, yet owe your present views to the same almighty grace. If the Lord had not diffinguished you from your brethren, you would have been now in the character of a minister misleading the people, and opposing those precious truths you are now labouring to establish. Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory! I shall be thankful to hear from you at your leisure. Be pleased to inform me, whether you received the knowledge of the truth before or fince you were in orders; how long you have preached the joyful found of falvation by Jesus, and what is the state of things in your parts.

We are called to an honorable service, but it is arduous. What wisdom does it require to keep the middle path in doctrines, avoiding the equally dangerous errors on the right hand and the left! What steadiness, to speak the truth boldly and faithfully in the midst of a gainsaying world! What humility, to stand against the tide of popularity! What meekness, to endure all things for the Elect's sake, that they may be saved. Who is sufficient for these things?

things? We are not in ourselves, but there is an all-sufficiency in Jesus. Our enemy watches us close; he challenges and defires to have us, that he may fift us as wheat; he knows he can eafily shake us if we are left to ourselves; but we have a shepherd, a keeper, who never flumbers nor fleeps. If he permits us to be exercised, it is for our good: he is at hand to direct, moderate, and fanctify every dispensation; he has prayed for us that our faith may not fail, and he has promifed to maintain his fear in our hearts, that we may not depart from him. When we are prone to wander, he calls us back; when we fay, my feet flip, his mercy holds us up; when we are wounded, he heals; when we are ready to faint, he revives. The people of God are fure to meet with enemies, but especially the ministers: Satan bears them a double grudge: the world watches for their halting, and the Lord will suffer them to be afflicted that they may be kept humble, that they may acquire a fympathy with the fufferings of others, that they may be experimentally qualified to advise and help them, and to comfort them with the comforts with which they themselves have been comforted of God. But the Captain of our falvation is with us; his eye is upon us, his everlasting arm beneath us; in his name therefore may we go on, lift up our banners, and fay, If God be for us who can be against us? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that has loved us. The time is short: yet a little while and he will wipe all tears from our eyes, and put a crown of life

THE REV. MR. B.

life upon our heads with his own gracious hand. In this fense, how beautiful are those lines:

Temporis illius

Me consolor imagine

Festis quum populus me reducem choris,

Fautisque excipiet vocibus, & Dei

Pompa cum celebri, me comitabitur

Augusta ad penetralia. Buch. in Ps. 42.

If any occasions should call you into these parts, my house and pulpit will be glad to receive you. Pray for us, dear Sir, and believe me to be

Your affectionate brother and servant, Sept. 14, 1765. in our dear Lord Jesus.

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LETTER

VERY DEAR SIR.

OUR letter of the 4th ult. gave me great pleasure. I thank you for the particular account you have favoured me with. with you, sympathize with you, and find my heart opened to correspond with unreserved freedom. May the Lord direct our pens, and help us to help each other. The work you are engaged in is great. and your difficulties many; but faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it. The weapons which he has now put into your hands are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Men may fight, but they shall not prevail against us, if we are but enabled to put our cause simply into the Lord's hands, and keep steadily on in the path of duty. He will plead our cause and fight our battles; he will pardon our mistakes, and teach us to do better. My experience as a minister is but small, having been but about eighteen months in the vineyard, but for about twelve years I have been favoured with an increasing acquaintance among the people of God of various ranks and denominations, which, together with the painful exercises of my own heart, gave me opportunity of making observations which were of great use to me when I entered upon the work myself: and ever fince I have found the Lord gracioufly

graciously supplying new lights and new strength, as new occurrences arise. So I trust it will be with you I endeavour to avail myself of the examples, advice, and sentiments of my brethren, yet at the same time to guard against calling any man master. This is the peculiar of Christ. The best are but men; the wisest may be mistaken; and that which may be right in another might be wrong in me, through a difference of circumstances. The Spirit of God distributes variously, both in gifts and dispensations; and I would no more be tied to act strictly by others rules than to walk in shoes of the same size. My shoes must fit my own feet.

I endeavour to guard against extremes : our nature is prone to them; and we are liable likewife, when we have found the inconvenience of one extreme to revert infentibly (fometimes to fly fuddenly) to the other. I pray to be led in the midst of the path. I am what they call a Calvinist; yet there are flights, niceties, and hard fayings, to be found among some of that system, which I do not chuse to imitate. I dislike those sentiments against which you have borne your testimony in the note at the end of your preface: but having known many precious fouls in that party, I have been taught, that the kingdom of God is not in names and fentiments, but in righteousness, faith, love, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I should however upon some occasions oppose those tenets, if they had any prevalence in my neighbourhood; but they have not; and in general I believe the furest way to refute or prevent error is to preach the truth, I am 09,2310

glad to find you are aware of that spirit of enthufiaim which has fo often broken loofe and blemished hopeful beginnings, and that the foundation you build upon is folid and scriptural: this will I hope fave you much trouble, and prevent many offences. Let us endeavour to make our people acquainted with the scripture, and to impress them with a high fense of its authority, excellence and sufficiency, Satan feldom remarkably impofes on ministers or people, except where the word of God is too little confulted or regarded. Another point in which I aim at a medium is in what is called prudence. There is certainly fuch a thing as Christian prudence, and a remarkable deficiency of it is highly inconvenient. But caution too often degenerates into cowardice; and if the fear of man, under the name of prudence, gets within our guard, like a chilling frost it nips every thing in the bud. Those who trust the Lord, and act openly with an honest freedom and confistence, I observe he generally bears them out, smooths their way, and makes their enemies their friends, or at least restrains their rage; while fuch as halve things, temporife, and aim to please God and man together, meet with double disappointment, and are neither useful nor respected. If we trust to him, he will stand by us; if we regard men, he will leave us to make the best we can of them. regel black I hand by to I show it voi

I have set down hastily what occurred to my pen, not to dictate to you, but to tell you how I have been led, and because some expressions in your letter seemed to imply that you would not be displeased

pleased with me for so doing. As to books, I think there is a medium here likewise. I have read too much in time past: yet I do not wholly join with fome of our brethren, who would reftrain us entirely to the word of God. Undoubtedly this is the fountain; here we should dwell; but a moderate and judicious perufal of other authors may have its use; and I am glad to be beholden to fuch helps. either to explain what I do not understand, or to confirm me in what I do. Of these the writings of the last age afford an immense variety.

But above all, may we, dear Sir, live and feed upon the precious promises, John xiv. ver. 16, 17, 26, and xvi. ver. 13-15. There is no teacher like Jefus, who by his holy Spirit reveals himself in his word to the understanding and affections of his children. When we thus behold his glory in the Gospel glass, we are changed into the same image, Then our hearts melt, our eyes flow, our flammering tongues are unloofed. That this may be your increasing experience is the prayer of, dear Sir,

Nov. 2, 1765. Your affectionate brother,

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LETTER III.

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DEAR STR,

TOUR letters give me the fincerest pleasure. Let us believe that we are daily thinking of and praying for each other, and write when opportunity offers without apologies. I praise the Lord that he has led you fo foon to a fettled judgment in the leading truths of the Gospel. For want of this, many have been necessitated with their own hands to pull down what, in the first warm emotions of their zeal, they had laboured hard to build. It is a mercy likewife to be enabled to acknowledge what is excellent in the writings or conduct of others, without adopting their fingularities, or difcarding the whole on account of a few blemishes. We should be glad to receive instruction from all, and avoid being led by the ipfe dixit of any. Nullius jurare in verbum is a fit motto for those who have one master, even Christ. We may grow wise apace in opinions, by books and men; but vital, experimental knowledge can only be received from the Holy Spirit, the great instructor and comforter of his people. And there are two things observable in his teaching: 1. That he honors the means of his own appointment, fo that we cannot expect to make any great progress without diligence on our parts: 2. That he does not teach all at once, but by degrees. Experience is his school; and by this I mean

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mean the observation and improvement of what passes within us and around us in the course of every day. The word of God affords a history in miniature of the heart of man, the devices of Satan, the state of the world, and the method of grace. And the most instructing and affecting commentary on it to an enlightened mind may be gathered from what we see, feel, and hear, from day to day. Res, atas, usus, semper aliquid apportent novi : and no knowledge in spiritual things but what we acquire in this way is properly our own, or will abide the time of trial. This is not always fufficiently confidered; we are ready to expect that others should receive upon our word, in half an hour's time, those views of things which have cost us years to attain. But none can be brought forward faster than the Lord is pleased to communicate inward light. Upon this ground controversies have been multiplied among Christians to little purpose, for plants of different standings will be (ceteris paribus) in different degrees of forwardness. A young Christian is like a green fruit; it has perhaps a difagreeable aufterity, which cannot be corrected out of its proper course: it wants time and growth: wait a while, and by the nourishment it receives from the root, together with the action of the fun, wind, and rain, in succession from without, it will infenfibly acquire that flavor and maturity, for the want of which an unfkilful judge would be ready to reject it as nothing worth. We are favored with many excellent books in our tongue; but I with you agree in affigning one of the first places (as a teacher)

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teacher) to Dr. Owen. I have just finished his discourse on the Holy Spirit, which is an epitome. if not the mafter-piece of his writings. I should be glad to fee the republication you fpeak of, but I question if the booksellers will venture upon it. I shall perhaps mention it to my London friends. As to Archbishop Leighton, besides his select works, there are two octavo volumes published at Edinburgh in the year 1748, and fince reprinted at London. They contain a valuable commentary on St. Peter's first Epistle, and Lectures on Isa, vi. Pf. xxxix. cxxx. iv. and a part of Rom. xii. I have likewise a small quarto in Latin of his Divinity Lectures, when professor at Edinburgh: the short title is, Prælectiones Theologiæ. Mine was printed in London 1698. I believe this book is fcarce: I fet the highest value upon it. He has wonderfully united the simplicity of the Gospel with all the captivating beauties of style and language. Bishop Burnet says, he was the greatest mafter of the Latin tongue he ever knew, of which, together with his compass of learning, he has given proof in his lectures: yet, in this gayer drefs, his eminent humility and spirituality appear to no less advantage than when clad in plain English. I think it may be faid to be a diamond fet in gold. I could wish it translated, if it was possible, (which I almost question) to preserve the beauty and fpirit of the original.

Edwards on Free-will I have read with pleasure, as a good answer to the proud reasoners in their own way; but a book of that fort cannot be generally rally read: where the subject matter is unpleasing, and the method of treating it requires more attention than the Athenian spirit of the times will bear, I wonder not if it is uncalled for; and am afraid we shall not see him upon Original Sin, if it depends upon the sale of the other. This answer to Dr. Taylor which you speak of is not a MS. but has been already printed at Boston.

You fend us good news indeed, that two more of your brethren are declaring on the Gospel side. The Lord confirm and strengthen them, add yet to your numbers, and make you helps and comforts to each other. Surely he is about to spread his work. Happy those whom he honors to be fellow-workers with him. Let us account the difgrace we fuffer for his name's fake to be our great honor. Many will be against us, but there are more for us. the praying fouls on earth, all the glorified faints in heaven, all the angels of God, yea, the God of angels himself, all are on our side. Satan may rage, but he is a chained enemy. Men may contradict and fight, but they cannot prevail. Two things we shall especially need, courage and patience, that we neither faint before them, nor upon any provocation act in their spirit. If we can pity and pray for them, return good for evil, make them fensible that we bear them a hearty good will, and act as the disciples of him who wept for his enemies and prayed for his murderers, in this way we shall find the Lord will plead our cause, soften opposers, and by degrees give us a measure of outward peace. Warmth and imprudence have often added to the necessary

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necessary burthen of the cross. I rejoice that the Lord has led you in a different way; and I hope your doctrine and example will make your path smoother every day; you find it so in part already. As the Lord brings you out a people witnesses for you to the truth of his word, you will find advantage in bringing them often together. The interval from Sabbath to Sabbath is a good while, and affords time for the world and Satan to creep in. Intermediate meetings for prayer, &c. when properly conducted, are greatly useful. I could wish for larger sheets and longer leisure, but I am constrained to say adieu,

in our dear Lord and Saviour,

Jan. 21, 1766. your most affectionate brother,

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HIS is not intended as an answer to your last acceptable letter, but an occasional line, in consequence of the account Mr. T—has given me of your late illness. I trust this dispensation will be useful to you, and I wish the knowledge of it may be so to me. I am favored with an unusual share of health, and an equal flow of spirits. If the blow you have received should be a warning to me, I shall have cause to be thankful. I am glad to hear you are better: I hope the Lord has no design to disable you from service, but rather (as he did Jacob) to strengthen you by wounding you; to maintain and increase in you that conviction, which through grace you have received, of the vanity and uncertainty of every thing below; to give you a lively sense of the value of health and opportunities, and to add to the treasury of your experience new proofs of his power and goodness, in supporting, comforting, and healing you; and likewise to quicken the prayers of your people for you, and to ftir them up to use double diligence in the present improvement of the means of grace, while by this late instance they see how soon and fuddenly you might have been removed from them.

I understand you did not feel that lively exercise of faith and joy which you would have hoped to Vol. II. H

have found at fuch a feafon: but let not this difcourage you from a firm confidence, that when the hour of dismission shall come the Lord will be faithful to his gracious promife, and give you Arength fufficient to encounter and vanquish your last enemy. You had not this strength lately, because you needed it not: for though you might think yourfelf near to death, the Lord intended to restore you; and he permitted you to feel weakness, that you might know your frength does not confift in grace received, but in his fulness, and his promise to communicate from himself as your occasions require. O it is a great thing to be ffrong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus! but it is a hard lesson; it is not easy to understand it in theory; but when the Lord has taught us to far, it is still more difficult to reduce our knowledge to practice. But this is one end he has in view, in permitting us to pass through such a variety of inward and outward exercises, that we may cease from trusting in ourselves, or in any creature, or frame, or experiences, and be brought to a state of submission and dependence upon him alone. I was once visited something in the same way, feized with a fit of the apoplectic kind, which held me near an hour, and left a diforder in my head which quite broke the scheme of life I was then in, and was confequently one of the means the Lord appointed to bring me into the ministry: but I foon perfectly recovered. From the remembrance Mrs. - has of what the then suffered, the knows how to sympathize with Mrs. B -- in her share of your trial. And I think dear Mr. fome

have

fome years fince had a fudden stroke on a Christmas day, which disabled him from duty for a time. To him and to me thefe turns were only like the caution which Philip of Macedon ordered to be repeated to him every morning, Remember thou art a man. I hope it will be no more to you, but that you shall live to praise him, and to give many cause to praise him on your behalf. Bleffed be God, we are in fafe hands: the Lord himfelf is our keeper: nothing befalls us but what is adjusted by his wifdom and love. Health is his gift, and fickness when fanctified is a token of love likewife. Here we may meet with many things which are not joyous, but grievous to the flesh; but he will in one way or other fweeten every bitter cup, and ere long he will wipe away all tears from our eyes. O that joy, that crown, that glory which awaits the believer! Let us keep the prize of our high calling in view, and press forward in the name of Jesus the Redeemer, and he will not disappoint our hopes.

I am but just come off from a journey, am weary, and it grows late; must therefore break off. When you have leifure and strength to write oblige me with a confirmation of your recovery, for I shall be fomething anxious about you.

I am very fincerely, dear Sir, 12 Dec. 1767. your most affectionate brother.

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My DEAR FRIEND,

Thought you long in writing, but am afraid I have been longer. A heavy family affliction called me from home in December, which put me out of my usual course, and threw me behind-hand in my correspondence; yet I did not suspect the date of your last letter was so old by two months as I find it. Whether I write more frequently or more feldom, the love of my heart to you is the fame; and I shall believe the like of you; yet if it can be helped, I hope the interval will not be fo long again on either fide. I am glad that the Lord's work still flourishes in our parts, and that you have a more comfortable prospect at home than formerly: and I was pleafed with the acceptance you found at S-, which I hope will be an earnest of greater things. I think affairs in general, with respect to this land, have a dark appearance; but it is comfortable to observe, that amidst the aboundings of iniquity the Lord is spreading his Gospel, and that though many oppose, yet in most places whither the Word is fent great numbers feem disposed to hear. I am going (if the Lord please) into Leicestershire on Friday. This was lately such a dark place as you describe your county to be, and much of it is fo still; but the Lord has visited three of the principal towns with Gospel light.

THE REV. MR. B____.

hight. I have a defire of visiting these brethren in the vineyard, to bear my poor testimony to the truths they preach, and to catch, if I may, a little fire and servor among them. I do not often go abroad, but I have found a little excursion now and then (when the way is made plain) has its advantages, to quicken the spirits and enlarge the sphere of observation. On these accounts the recollection of my N—— journey gives me pleasure to this day, and very glad should I be to repeat it; but the distance is so great that I consider it rather as desirable than practicable.

My experiences vary as well as yours: but poffibly your fensations, both of the sweet and of the bitter, may be stronger than mine. The enemy assaults me more by sap than storm; and I am ready to think I suffer more by languor than some of my friends do by the sharper conflicts to which they are called. So likewise in these seasons, which comparatively I call my best hours, my sensible comforts are far from lively. But I am in general enabled to hold fast my confidence, and to venture myself upon the power, faithfulness, and compassion of that adorable Saviour, to whom my soul has been directed and encouraged to flee for refuge. I am a poor, changeable, inconfistent ercature, but he deals graciously with me; he does not leave me wholly to myself; but I have such daily proofs of the malignity and efficacy of the fin that dwelleth. in me as ought to cover me with shame and confusion of face, and make me thankful if I am permitted to rank with the meanest of those who fit at

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his feet. That I was ever called to the knowledge of his falvation was a fingular instance of his fovereign grace; and that I am still preserved in the way, in defiance of all that has arisen from within and from without to turn me aside, must be wholly ascribed to the same sovereignty. And if, as I trust, he shall be pleased to make me a conqueror at last, I shall have peculiar reason to say, Not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name, O Lord, be the glory and the praise.

How oft have fin and Satan strove
To rend my soul from thee, my God:
But everlasting is thy love,
And Jesus seals it with his blood.

The Lord leads me in the course of my preaching to infift much on a life of communion with himself, and of the great defign of the Gospel to render us conformable to him in love; and as by his mercy nothing appears in my outward conduct remarkably to contradict what I fay, many who only can judge by what they fee, suppose I live a very happy life. But alas! if they knew what palles in my heart, how dull my spirit is in secret, and how little I am myfelfaffected by the glorious truths I propose to others, they would form a different judgment. Could I be myself what I recommend to them, I should be happy indeed. Pray for me, my dear friend, that now the Lord is bringing forward the pleasing spring, he may favour me with a spring feafon in my foul, for indeed I mourn under a long winter. I am your fincerely affectionate friend 14 March, 1775. and fervant.

LETTER VI.

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MY DEAR FRIEND, To los of the planting

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Hope the Lord has contracted my defires and aims almost to the one point of study, the knowledge of his truth. All other acquisitions are transient and comparatively vain. And yet, alas ! I am a flow scholar : nor can I see in what respect I get forward, unless that every day I am more confirmed in the conviction of my own emptiness and inability to all spiritual good. And as notwithflanding this I am still enabled to stand my ground, I would hope, fince no effect can be without an adequate caufe, that I have made some advance, though in a manner imperceptible to myself, towards a more fimple dependence upon Jesus as my all in all. It is given me to thirst and to taste, if it is not given me to drink abundantly; and I would be thankful for the defire. I fee and approve the wisdom, grace, suitableness and sufficiency of the Gospel salvation; and since it is for finners, and I am a finner, and the promises are open, I do not hesitate to call it mine. I am a weary, laden foul; Jesus has invited me to come, and has enabled me to put my truft in him. I feldom have an uneasy doubt, at least not of any continuance, respecting my pardon, acceptance, and interest in all the blessings of the New Testament. And amidst a thousand infirmities and evils H A

under which I groan, I have the testimony of my conscience when under the trial of his word, that my defire is fincerely towards him, that I choose no other portion, that I allowedly ferve no other master. When I told our friend - lately to this purpose, he wondered, and asked, . How is it possible that if you can say these things you should not be always rejoicing?" Undoubtedly I derive from the Gofpel a peace at bottom which is worth more than a thousand worlds: but so it is. I can only speak for myself, though I rest and live upon the truths of the Gospel, they seldom, impress me with a warm and lively joy. In public indeed I fometimes feem in earnest and much affected, but even then, it appears to me rather as a part of the gift intructed to me for the edification of others. than as a fenfation which is properly my own. For when I am in private I am usually dull and flupid tors strange degree, or the prey to a wild and ungoverned imagination; fo that I may truly fay, when I would do good, evil, horrid evil is present with me, Ah, how different is this from fensible comfort I and if I was to compare myself to others. to make their experience my flandard, and was not helped to retreat to the fure word of God as my refuge, how hard should I find it to maintain a hope that I had either part or lot in the matter! What I call my good times are, when I can find my attention in some little measure fixed to what I am about, which indeed is not always nor frequently my case in prayer, and still feldomer in reading the feripture. My judgment under ... and would be H

embraces these means as bleffed privileges, and Satan has not prevailed to drive me from them; but in the performance I too often find them tasks, feel a reluctance when the feafons return, and am glad when they are finished. O what a mystery is the heart of man! What a warfare is the life of faith (at least in the path the Lord is pleased to lead me!) What reason have I to lie in the dust as the chief of finners, and what cause for thankfulness that falvation is wholly of grace! Notwithstanding all my complaints it is still true that Jesus died and rose again, that he ever liveth to make intercession, and is able to fave to the uttermost. But on the other hand, to think of that joy of heart in which some of his people live, and to compare it with that apparent deadness and want of spirituality which I feel, this makes me mourn. However, I think there is a scriptural distinction between faith and feeling, grace and comfort; they are not infeparable, and perhaps when together the degree of the one is not often the just measure of the other. But though I pray that I may be ever longing and panting for the light of his countenance, yet I would be fo far fatisfied, as to believe the Lord has wife and merciful reasons for keeping me so short of the comforts which he has taught me to defire and value more than the light of the fun.

16 April, 1772. Believe me most fincerely yours.

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copraces the leoneous as lake field providence, and Satan has not pravailed to deve me from theme beblin the performance I too often had them telloughed a realisance when the Radion recurred and am plant when they are buildied. O we as arreferring the dual to suced a solute condV. I can to the (Ham been on bolicated of the dead and and an afficial sa) What realon have been be to the died as this color of honors, and what cause for anadolomets that the school is whelly of grace! Notwith Spacific all lefter have read a finite court field of an examination of the File agains, that he is endived to make an ereceiving and is able to taya southe untermoft, Buston the other hand, to think of that joy of heart in which tory of his prople live and to compare it with ted apparent declared and twater of the their tenting I probably include in the distribution and don't a lief-useward norther the transferred or state being and facting, there and countries they are notice. househer, did the ham we believed this the de precess Seattle of the sentence the win to to the the the Les writes of sout my seed like wine I decompared part of the case light of this countries not gut the week man, I cold own feet at on the their set of the larger with and rest cited contains for Recoincy the fields of the contract or this cauca me to define and value near expansible light of the fight. Leadytis, 1772 Believe we made underdry pours. the man the contract to make a conjust a loss of protection

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LETTERS

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DEAR, SIR, important and your shirt I set

I T is true I was apprehensive from your silence that I had offended you, but when your letter came it made me full amends: and now I am glad I wrote as I did, though I am persuaded I shall never write to you again in the same strain. I am pleased with the spirit you discover; and your bearing so well to be told of the mistakes I pointed out to you endears you more to me than if you had not made them. Henceforward I can converse freely with you, and shall be glad when I have the opportunity.

As to your view of justification, I did not oppose it; I judge for myself, and I am willing others should have the same liberty. If we hold the bead and love the Lord, we agree in him, and I should

think

think my time illy employed in disputing the point with you. I only meant to except against the posttive manner in which you had expressed yourself. My end is answered, and I am satisfied. Indeed I believe the difference between a judicious Supralapfarian, and a found Sub-lapfarian, lies more in a different way of expressing their sentiments than is generally thought. At the close of Halyburton's Insufficiency of Natural Religion, he has an Enquiry into the Nature of Regeneration and Justification, wherein he proposes a scheme in which, if I miftake not, the moderate of both parties might fafely unite. I have used the epithets judicious and found, because, as I acknowledge some of the one fide are not quite found, fo I think fome on the other fide are not fo judicious as I could wish : that is. I think they do not sufficiently advert to the present state of human nature, and the danger which may arise from leading those who are weak in faith and judgment into inquiries, and distinctions evidently beyond the line of their experience. and which may be hurtful; because, admitting them to be true when properly explained, they are very liable to be misunderstood. To say nothing of Mr. Hussey (in whose provisions I have frequently found more bones than meat, and feafoned with much of an angry and felf-important (pirity) I have observed passages in other writers, for whom I have a higher efferm, which, to fay the leaft, appear to me paradoxical and hard to be understood; though perhaps I can give my consent to them, if I had such restrictions and limitations as the shink

the authors would not refuse. But plain people are eafily puzzled. And though I know feveral in the supra-lapfarian scheme at whose feet I am willing to fit and learn, and have found their preaching and conversation savoury and edifying, yet I must say I have met with many who have appeared to be rather wife than warm, rather politive than humble, rather captious than lively, and more difpaled to talk of speculations than experience. However, let us give ourselves to the study of the word and to prayer; and may the Great Teacher make every foriptural truth food to our fouls. I defire to grow in knowledge, but I want nothing which bears that name that has not a direct tendency to make fin more hateful. Jefus more precious to my foul; and at the fame time to animate me to a diligent use of every appointed means, and an unreserved regard to every branch of duty. I think the Lord has thewn me in a measure there is a confishent fense running through the whole scripture, and I defire to be poverned and influenced by it all; doctrines, precepts, promifes, warnings, all have their proper place and use; and I think many of the inconveniences which obtain in the present day. fpring from feparating those things which God hath joined together, and infifting on some parts of the word of God almost to the exclusion of the rest.

I have filled my paper with what I did not intend to fay a word of when I begun, and must leave other things which were more upon my mind for another feason. I thank you for faying you pray for me. Continue that kindness; I both need it and prize it.

Jan. 16, 1772.

I am, &c.

the authors would not refuse. But plain paople are cashly puzzled. And though I know kereal is the suprableplarian scheme at whose seed am wil-

ting to fit and length and remy their proach.

built fay I have met with many who beve an Gred to be rather wife than warm, rather positive than

I Received your formowful epittle yesterday, and in order to encourage you to wisted I answered to-day. I to the the court of the same of the court of the court

The thip was fafe when Christ was in her, though he was really afteen. At prefent I can tell you good news, though you know it he is wide awake, and his eyes are in every place. In You and I, if we could be pounded together, might berhaps make two tolerable onesit Wou are too anxious. and I am too easy in some respects. Indeed I cannot be too easy, when I have a right thought that all is fafe in his hands; but if your anxiety makes you pray, and my composure makes me careles. you have certainly the best of it. However, the ark is fixed upon an immoveable foundation, and if we think we fee it totter, it is owing to a fwimming in our heads; Seriously, the times look dark and flormy, and call for much circumfrection and prayor; but let us not forget that we have an infallible pilot, and that the power, and wildom, and honor of God, are embarked with us. At Venice they have a fine veffel called the Bucentaur, in which on a certain day of the year the Doge and Nobles embark and go a little way to fea, to repeat the foolish ceremony of marriage between the Republic and the Adriatic, in (confequence of some Lam, Re. .gni/dn. 16, 1272.

lying, antiquated Pope's bull, by which the banns of matrimony between Venice and the Gulf were published in the dark ages,) when they fay a gold ring is very gravely thrown overboard. Upon this occasion, I have been told, when the honor and government of Venice are shipped on board the Bucentaur, the pilot is obliged by his office to take an oath that he will bring the vessel safely back again, in defiance of winds and weather. Vain mortals! If this be true, what an instance of God's long-fuffering is it that they have never yet funk as lead in the mighty waters! But my ftory will probably remind you, that Jesus has actually entered into fuch an engagement in behalf of his church. And well he may, for both wind and weather are at his command, and he can turn the fform into a calm in a moment. We may therefore fafely and confidently leave the government upon his shoulders. Duty is our part, the care is his.

A revival is wanted with us as well as with you, and I trust some of us are longing for it. We are praying and singing for one, and I send you on the other side a hymn that you (if you like it) may sing with us. Let us take courage; though it may seem marvellous in our eyes, it is not so in the Lord's. He changed the defart into a fruitful field, and bid dry bones live. And if he prepare our heart to pray, he will surely incline his ear to hear.

The miscarriages of professors are grievous, yet such things must be, how else could the scriptures be sulfilled? But there is one who is able to keep

us from falling. Some who have diffrested us perhaps never were truly changed, how then could they stand? We see only the outside. Others who are fincere are permitted to fall for our instruction, that we may not be high-minded, but fear. However, he that walketh humbly walketh Bucentaur, the pilot is obliged by his office cylerin

July 31, 1773. Believe me sincerely yours. South the selection of winds and weather! Vale took

the life the best must swhat an inflated of Chile long but river in the three the voluments per that as ed in justicity waters : Barring they will bible oably staning you, where telments actually entered mas such an approper ent die behalf ef his ebdich u

And will be may, for business and weather are of his gorner, and percent curposhe from tale a sain an a momenty We have the Horifore fafely and considerated that the comments appropriate

Michigan Lamestone out, the core is his wife Engeliert is manied with using well as with you. and I confidence of up are longing located after the

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Level's, H. Hangood one destar into a Which Hold, and bid dry borne, Live. And if he prepare tue heart, on pray he will fundly incline his pare to free!

THE LETTER

Ine militarriages on professore prievous, very he steerings it aid be, now elle could the second is tallified. But there is one with landle to bress. 18 and the state of the tentence of the

LETTER III.

deceived by the found of a text of feripture, which, detached from the pallage in which is dands, may

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DEAR SIR. Wyord mode avert hid there say OUR letter by last post surprised and grieved I me. We knew nothing of the subject, though Mrs. ____ remembers when ____ was here a hint or two was dropped which she did not

understand, but no name was mentioned.

This inflance shews the danger of leaning to impressions, Texts of scripture brought powerfully to the heart are very defirable and pleasant, if their tendency is to humble us, to give us a more feeling fense of the preciousness of Christ or of the doctrines of grace, if they make fin more hateful, enliven our regard to the means, or increase our confidence in the power and faithfulness of God. But if they are understood as intimating our path of duty in particular circumstances, or confirming us in purposes we may have already formed, not otherwife clearly warranted by the general strain of the word, or by the leadings of Providence, they are for the most part infnaring, and always to be fulpected. Nor does their coming into the mind at the time of prayer give them more authority in this respect. When the mind is intent upon any subject, the imagination is often watchful to catch at any thing which may feem to countenance the favorite pursuit. It is too common to ask counsel of the Lord when we have already secretly determined for ourselves: and in this disposition we may easily be A deceived I am fingerely yours.

deceived by the found of a text of scripture, which, detached from the passage in which it stands, may seem remarkably to tally with our wishes. Many have been deceived this way; and sometimes when the event has shewn them they were mistaken, it has opened a door for great distress, and Satan has found occasion to make them doubt even of their

most folid experiences.

I have sometimes talked to — upon this subject, though without the least suspicion of any thing like what has happened. As to the present case, it may remind us all of our weakness. I would recommend prayer, patience, much tenderness towards her, joined with faithful exposulation. Wait a little while, and I trust the Lord who loves her will break the share. I am persuaded in her better judgment she would dread the thoughts of doing wrong; and I hope and believe the good Shepherd, to whom she has often committed her soul and her ways, will interpose to restore and set her to rights.

22 Feb. 1774.

I am fincerely yours.

I am forry you think any of whom you have hoped well are going back; but be not discouraged. I say again, pray and wait, and hope the best. It is common for young professors to have a slack time; it is almost necessary, that they may be more sensible of the weakness and deceitfulness of their hearts, and be more humbled in suture, when the Lord shall have healed their breaches and restored their souls. We join love to you and yours. Pray for use along the interest and progressing the state of the property of the property

be necessary young which process them must be d'indeelling ideeunie. If things were ceneralle that

for his own false. Make, clothes, fire and boots cannot eatily be had without it: therefore if there

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wife courted there I would fave T T would be wrong to make you wait long for an answer to the point you propose in your last. It is an important one. I am not a casuift by profession, but I will do my best. Suppose I imitate your laconic manner of stating the question and circumstances.

I doubt not but it is very lawful at your age to think of marriage, and in the lituation you describe to think of money likewife. I am glad you have no person as you say fixedly in view, in that case advice comes a post or two too late. But your expression seems to intimate that there is one tranfiently in view. If it be fo, fince you have no settlement, if she has no money I cannot but wish she may pass on till the is out of fight and out of mind. I see this will not do; I must get into my own grave way about this grave business. I take it for granted that my friend is free from the love of filthy lucre, and that money will never be the turning point with you in the choice of a wife. Methinks I hear you think, if I wanted money I would either dig or beg for it; but to preach or marry for money, that be far from me. I commend you. However, though the love of money be a great evil, money itself, obtained in a fair and honorable way, is defirable upon many accounts, though not for

for its own fake. Meat, clothes, fire and books, cannot easily be had without it: therefore if these be necessary, money which procures them must be a necessary likewise. If things were otherwise than you represent them, if you were able to provide for a wife yourself, then I would say, Find a gracious girl (if the be not found already) whose person you like, whose temper you think will fuit; and then, with your father's and mother's confent, (without which I think you would be unwilling to move) thank the Lord for her, marry her, and account her a valuable portion, though she should not have a shilling. But while you are without income or fettlement, if you have thoughts of marriage, I hope they will be regulated by a due regard to consequences. They who set the least value upon money have in some respects the most need of it. A generous mind will feel a thousand pangs in strait circumstances which some unfeeling hearts would not be fenfible of. You could perhaps endure hardships alone, yet it might pinch you to the very bone to fee the person you love exposed to them. Besides, you might have a John, a Thomas, and a William, and half a dozen more to feed, (for they must all eat) and how this could be done without a competency on one fide or the other, or to much on both fides as will make a competency when united, I fee not. Besides, you would be grieved not to find an occasional shilling in your pocket to bestow upon one or other of the Lord's poor, though you should be able to make some fort of a shift for those of your own house.

But is it not written, " The Lord will provide?" It is: but it is written again, " Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Hastily to plunge ourselves into difficulties, upon a persuasion that he will find some way to extricate us, seems to me a species of tempting him.

Therefore I judge, It is so far lawful for you to have a regard to money in looking out for a wife, that it would be wrong, that is, in other words, unlawful, for you to omit it, supposing you have a pur-

pole of marrying in your present lituation.

Many ferious young women have a predilection in favor of a minister of the gospel; and I believe among fuch one or more may be found as spiritual, as amiable, as fuitable to make you a good wife, with a tolerable fortune to boot, as another who has not a penny. If you are not willing to truft your own judgment in the fearch, intreat the Lord to find her for you. He chose well for Isaac and Jacob; and you as a believer have warrant to conmit your way to him, and many more express promiles than they had for your encouragement. He knows your state, your wants, what you are at prefent, and what use he defigns to make of you. Trust in him, and wait for him: prayer and faith and patience are never disappointed. I commend you to his bleffing and guidance. Remember us to all in your house, are not some all wait to be

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DEAR SIR,

have a regard to noung in booking war given with, that Torston Trees and and an and anot expect a long letter this morning; we are just going to court, in hopes of feeing the King, for he has promifed to meet us. We can fay he is mindful of his promife; and yet is it not frange that though we are all in the fame place, and the King in the midft of us, it is but here and there one (even of those who love him) can fee him at once! However, in our turns we are all favored with a glimple of him, and have had cause to say, How great is his goodness, how great is his beauty! We have the advantage of the Queen of Sheba, a more glorious object to behold, and not fo far to go for the fight of it. If a tranfient glance exceeds all that the world can afford for a long continuance, what must it be to dwell with him! If a day in his courts be better than a thoufand, what will eternity be in his presence! I hope the more you fee, the more you love; the more you drink, the more you thirft; the more you do for him, the more you are ashamed you can do fo little; and that the nearer you approach to your journey's end, the more your pace is quickened. Surely the power of spiritual attraction should increase as the distance lessens. O that heavenly loadstone! may it so draw us that we may not creep, RITTER but

but run. In common travelling, the strongest become weary if the journey be very long; but in the spiritual journey we are encouraged with a hope of going on from strength to strength. Inflaurabit iter vires, as Johnson expresses it. No road but the road to heaven can thus communicate refreshment to those who walk in it, and make them more fresh and lively when they are just finishing their course than when they first set out.

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LETTER

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LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

RE you fick, or lame of your right hand, or are you bufy in preparing a folio for the press, that I hear nothing from you? You see by the excuses I would contrive I am not willing to suppose you have forgotten me, but that your silence is rather owing to a cannot than a willnot.

I hope your foul prospers. I do not ask you if you are always filled with fenfible comfort : but do you find your spirit more bowed down to the feet and will of Jesus, so as to be willing to serve him for the fake of serving him, and to follow him as we fay through thick and thin; to be willing to be any thing or nothing fo that he may be glorified? I could give you plenty of good advice upon this head, but I am ashamed to do it because I so poorly follow it myself. I want to live with him by the day, to do all for him, to receive all from him, to possess all in him, to leave all to him, to make him my hiding-place and my resting-place. I want to deliver up that rebel felf to him in chains; but the rogue, like Proteus, puts on fo many forms, that he flips through my fingers: but I think I know what I would do if I could fairly catch him.

My foul is like a befieged city: a legion of enemies without the gates, and a nest of restless traitors within that hold a correspondence with them without: .

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without; so that I am deceived and counteracted continually. It is a mercy that I have not been furprifed and overwhelmed long ago: without help from on high it would foon be over with me. How often have I been forced to cry out, O God, the heathen are got into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled, and defaced all thy work! Indeed it is a miracle that I still hold out. I trust, however, I shall be supported to the end, and that my Lord will at length raise the siege, and cause me to shout deliverance and victory.

Pray for me, that my walls may be strengthened and wounds healed. We are all pretty well as to the outward man, and join in love to all friends. 18 April, 1776. I am your affectionate friend.

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DEAR SIR,

I Was abroad when your letter came, but employ the first post to thank you for your confidence. My prayers (when I can pray) you may be sure of; as to advice, I see not that the case requires much. Only be a quiet child, and lie patiently at the Lord's seet. He is the best friend and manager in these matters, for he has a key to open every heart

- - I should not have taken Mr. Z---'s letter for a denial, as it feems you did. Confidering the years of the parties, and other circumstances, a prudent parent could hardly fay more, if he were inclined to favor your views. To me you feem to be in a tolerable fair way; but I know in affairs of this kind Mr. Self does not like suspence, but would willingly come to the point at once: but Mr. Faith (when he gets liberty to hold up his head) will own, that in order to make our temporal mercies wear well, and to give us a clearer fense of the hand that bestows them, a waiting and a praying time are very seasonable. Worldly people expect their schemes to run upon all-fours, as we say, and the objects of their wishes to drop into their mouths without difficulty; and if they succeed they of course burn incense to their own drag, and say, This

This was my doing: but believers meet with rubs and disappointments, which convince them, that if they obtain any thing it is the Lord must do it for them. For this reason I observe, that he usually brings a death upon our prospects, even when it is his purpose to give us success in the issue. Thus we become more affured that we did not act in our own fpirits, and have a more fatisfactory view that his Providence has been concerned in filling up the rivers and removing the mountains that were in our way. Then when he has given us our defire, how pleafant is it to look at it and fay, This I got not by my own fword and my own bow, but I wrestled for it in prayer, I waited for it in faith, I put it into the Lord's hand, and from his hand I received it.

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You have met with the story of one of our Kings (if I mistake not) who wanted to send a nobleman abroad as his ambaffador, and he defired to be excufed on account of fome affairs which required his presence at home: the King answered, "Do you " take care of my business, and I will take care of " yours." I would have you think the Lord fays thus to you. You were fent into the world for a nobler end than to be pinned to a girl's apronfiring; and yet if the Lord fees it not good for you to be alone, he will provide you a helpmeet. I fay, if he fees the marriage state best for you, he has the proper person already in his eye, and though she were in Peru or Nova-Zembla he knows how to bring you together. In the mean time, go thou and preach the Gospel. Watch in all things; I 3 endure

endure afflictions; do the work of an Evangeliff. make full proof of your Ministry: and when other thoughts rife in your mind (for you have no door to flut them quite out) run with them to the throne of grace, and commit them to the Lord. will perhaps try to force them upon you unfeafonably and inordinately, but if he fees they drive you to prayer he will probably desist, rather than be the occasion of doing you so much good. Believe likewise, that as the Lord has the appointment of the person, so he fixes the time. His time is like the time of the tide; all the art and power of man can neither haften or retard it a moment; it must be waited for; nothing can be done without it, and when it comes nothing can resist it. It is unbelief that talks of delays: faith knows that properly there can be no fuch thing. The only reason why the Lord seems to delay what he afterwards grants is, that the best hour is not yet come. I know you have been enabled to commit and refign your all to his disposal. You did well. May he help you to stand to the furrender. Sometimes he will put us to the trial, whether we mean what we fay. He takes his course in a way we did not expect, and then, alas! how often does the trial put us to shame. Presently there is an outory raised in the foul against his management; this is wrong, that unnecessary, the other has spoiled the whole plan; in short, all these things are against us. And then we go into the pulpit, and gravely tell the people how wife and how good he is, and preach submission to his will, not only as a duty, but

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but a privilege! Alas! how deceitful is the heart! yet fince it is and will be fo, it is necessary we should know it by experience. We have reason however to say, He is good and wise; for he bears with our perverseness, and in the event shews us that if he had listened to our murmurings, and taken the methods we would have prescribed to him, we should have been ruined indeed, and that he has been all the while doing us good in spite of ourselves.

If I judge right, you will find your way providentially opened more and more; and yet it is possible, that when you begin to think yourself sure, something may happen to put you in a panic again. But a believer, like a sailor, is not to be surprized if the wind changes, but to learn the art of suiting himself to all winds for the time; and though many a poor sailor is shipwrecked, the poor believer shall gain his port. O it is good sailing with an insallible pilot at the helm, who has the wind and weather at his command.

I have been much abroad, which of course puts things at fixes and sevens at home. If I did not love you well, I could not have spared so much of the only day I have had to myself for this fortnight past. But I was willing you should know that I think of you and seel for you, if I cannot help you.

I have read Mr. ——'s book. Some things I think strongly argued; in some he has laid himself open to a blow, and I doubt not but he will have it. I expect answers, replies, rejoinders, &c. &c. and say with Leah, Gad, a troop cometh. How the wolf I A will

will grin to fee the sheep and the shepherds biting and worrying one another! And well he may. He knows that contentions are a furer way to weaken the Spirit of love, and stop the progress of the Gospel, than his old stale method of fire and sword. Well, I trust we shall be of one heart and one mind when we get to heaven at leaft.

Let who will fight, I trust neither water nor fire shall fet you and me at variance. We unite in love to you. The Lord is gracious to us, &c.

July 6, 1776. 1 am affectionately yours.

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LETTER VIII.

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DEAR SIR,

I Do not often serve your letters so, but this last I burnt, believing you would like to have it out of danger of falling into improper hands. When I saw how eagerly the slames devoured the paper, how quickly and intirely every trace of the writing was consumed, I wished that the fire of the love of Jesus might as completely obliterate from your heart every uneasy impression which your disappointment has given you - - - - - - - -

our wishes it is always in mercy, and because we short-sighted creatures often know not what we ask, nor what would be the consequences if our desires were granted.

Your pride it seems has received a fall by meeting a repulse. I know Self does not like to be mortified in these affairs; but if you are made successful in wooing souls for Christ, I hope that will console you for meeting a rebust when only wooing for yourself. Besides, I would have you pluck up your spirits. I have two good old proverbs at your service, "There is as good sish in the sea as any that are brought out of it," and If one wont another will, or wherefore serves the market?" Perhaps all your difficulties have

arisen from this, that you have not yet seen the right person; if so, you have reason to be thankful that the Lord would not let you take the wrong, though you unwittingly would have done it if you could. Where the right one lies hid I know not, but upon a supposition that it will be good for you to marry, I may venture to say,

Ubi, ubi est, diu celari non potest.

The Lord in his Providence will disclose her, put her in your way, and give you to understand, This is she. Then you will find your business go forward with wheels and wings, and have cause to say, His choice and time were better than your own.

Did I not tell you formerly, that if you would take care of his business he will take care of yours? I am of the same mind still. He will not suffer them who fear him and depend upon him to want any thing that is truly good for them. In the mean while, I advise you to take a lodging as near as you can to Gethsemane, and to walk daily to mount Golgotha, and borrow (which may be had for asking) that telescope, which gives a prospect into the unfeen world. A view of what is paffing within the vail has a marvellous effect to compose our spirits, with regard to the little things that are daily passing here. Praise the Lord, who has enabled you to fix your supreme affection upon him who is alone the proper and suitable object of it, and from whom you cannot meet a denial or fear a change. He loved you first, and he will love you for ever; and if he be pleased to arise and smile upon

upon you, you are in no more necessity of begging for happiness to the prettiest creature upon earth, than of the light of a candle on Midsummer noon-

Upon the whole, I pray and hope the Lord will fweeten your crofs, and either in kind or in kindness make you good amends. Wait, pray, and believe, and all shall be well. A cross we must have somewhere; and they who are favoured with health, plenty, peace, and a conscience sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, must have more causes for thankfulness than grief. Look round you, and take notice of the very severe afflictions which many of the Lord's own people are groaning under, and your trials will appear comparatively light. Our love to all friends.

- 1776. I am fincerely yours.

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The LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR,

I T feems I must write something about the small-pox, but I know not well what: having had it myself, I cannot judge how I should feel if I were actually exposed to it. I am not a professed advocate for inoculation; but if a person who sears the Lord should tell me, "I think I can do it in faith, looking upon it as a salutary expedient, which he in his Providence has discovered, and which therefore appears my duty to have recourse to, so that my mind does not hesitate with respect to the lawfulness, nor am I anxious about the event; being satisfied, that whether I live or die I am in that path in which I can chear-sully expect his blessing," I do not know that I could offer a word by way of dissuasion.

If another person should say, "My times are in the Lord's hands; I am now in health, and am not willing to bring upon myself a disorder, the consequences of which I cannot possibly foresee. If I am to have the small-pox, I believe he is the best judge of the season and manner in which I shall be visited, so as may be most for his glory and my own good; and therefore I chuse to wait his appointment, and not to rush upon even the possibility of danger without a call. If the very hairs

hairs of my head are numbered, I have no reason to fear that, supposing I receive the small-pox in " a natural way, I shall have a single pimple more " than he fees expedient; and why should I wish to have one less? Nay, admitting, which how-" ever is not always the case, that inoculation " might exempt me from fome pain and inconve-" nience, and lessen the apparent danger, might it " not likewise, upon that very account, prevent " my receiving some of those sweet consolations, " which I humbly hope my gracious Lord would " afford me, if it were his pleasure to call me to a " fharp trial? Perhaps the chief design of this try-" ing hour, if it comes, may be to shew me more " of his wildom, power and love, than I have " ever yet experienced. If I could devise a mean " to avoid the trouble, I know not how great a " loser I may be in point of grace and comfort. " Nor am I afraid of my face; it is now as the "Lord has made it, and it will be fo after the " fmall-pox. If it pleases him, I hope it will " please me. In short, though I do not censure " others, yet as to myfelf, inoculation is what I dare " not venture upon. If I did venture, and the iffue " should not be favorable, I should blame myself " for having attempted to take the management out " of the Lord's hands into my own, which I never " did yet in other matters, without finding I am " no more able than I am worthy to chuse for " myfelf. Besides, at the best, inoculation would " only secure me from one of the innumerable cc natural " natural evils the flesh is heir to; I should still be as liable as I am at present to a putrid sever, a bilious cholic, an inflammation in the bowels or in the brain, and a thousand formidable diseases which are hovering round me, and only wait his permission to cut me off in a sew days or hours: and therefore I am determined by his grace to resign myself to his disposal. Let me fall into the hands of the Lord (for his mercies are great) and not into the hands of men."

If a person should talk to me in this strain, most certainly I could not say, Notwithstanding all this,

your safest way is to be inoculated.

We preach and hear, and I hope we know fomething of faith, as enabling us to intrust the Lord with our fouls: I wish we had all more faith to intrust him with our bodies, our health, our provision, and our temporal comforts likewise. The former should seem to require the strongest faith of the two. How strange is it, that when we think we can do the greater we should be so aukward and unskilful when we aim at the less! Give my love to your friend. I dare not advise: but if she can quietly return at the usual time, and neither run intentionally into the way of the small-pox, nor run out of the way, but leave it fimply with the Lord, I shall not blame her. And if you will mind your praying and preaching, and believe that the Lord can take care of her without any of your contrivances, I shall not blame you: nay, I shall praise him for you both. My prescription is to read Dr. Watts,

Hast thou not giv'n thy word,
To save my soul from death,
And I can trust my Lord,
To keep my mortal breath.
I'll go and come,
Nor fear to die
Till from on high
Thou call me home.

3 June, 1777.

Adieu, pray for yours.

THE REV. MIT. R. 183 White, Pam exxi. every morning before break-

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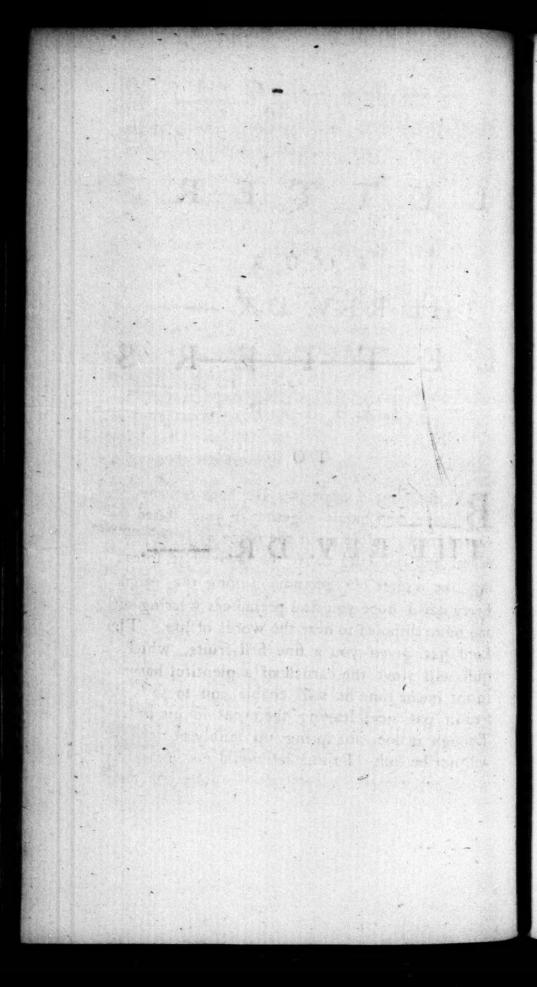
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from day to cave for indeed every wal good an DEAR SIR, April 17, 1776.

DY this time I hope you are both returned in D peace, and happy together in your stated favoured tract; rejoicing in the name of Jesus yourfelves, and rejoicing to fee the favor of it fpreading like a precious perfume among the people. Every day I hope you find prejudices wearing off, and more disposed to hear the words of life. The Lord has given you a fine first-fruits, which I trust will prove the earnest of a plentiful harvest. In the mean time he will enable you to fow the feed in patience, leaving the event in his hands. Though it does not fpring up visibly at once, it will not be loft. I think he would not have fent you if he had not a people there to call; but they can only come forth to view as he is pleased to bring them. Satan will try to hinder and difturb you, but he is in a chain which he cannot break, nor go a ftep farther than he is permitted. if you have been instrumental to the conversion of but a few, in those few you have an ample reward already for all the difficulties you have or can meet with. It is more honorable and important to be an instrument of saving one soul, than to rescue a whole kingdom from temporal ruin. Let us therefore, while we earnestly desire to be more useful, not forget to be thankful for what the Lord has been pleased already to do for us; and let us expect, knowing whose servants we are; and what a Gospel we preach, to see some new miracles wrought from day to day: for indeed every real conversion may be accounted miraculous, being no less than an immediate exertion of that power which made the heavens, and commanded the light to shine out of darkness. Your little telescope is safe. I wish I had more of that clear air and funfhine you speak of, that with you I might have more distinct views of the land of promise. I cannot say my prospect is greatly clouded by doubts of my reaching it at last; but then there is such a languor and deadness hangs upon my mind, that it is almost amazing to me how I can entertain any hopes at all. It feems if doubting could ever be reasonable, there is no one who has greater reason for doubting than myfelf. But I know not how to doubt, when I confider the faithfulness, grace, and compassion of him who. who has promised. If it could be proved that Christ had not died, or that he did not speak the words which are ascribed to him in the Gospel. or that he is not able to make them good, or that his word cannot fafely be taken; in any of thefe cases I should doubt to purpose, and lie down in despair. erlibme nov or fred and relater grood I am, &c. r.

A on your water tracey and good on A. coerticoción and ible Humbert a Mrs. --- has no. elier concerno crede stage it be many years before the is one on the best over which there is no bear. and the control of the state of the state of the state of the state of beginnings a mengelak lish below the few the fire. and a steamer to be a series of the second and softend, and for love? their criment, which could to engine it, parither permit on not danger or good the will know a the other action . Did not be ed has led first Leather award and I ad I light with great and with a floor, because I was for because and the evolution is a feel of the the count field it omitting ages a from their the reprelicipa I shall find in graduitely and never from the first of the season of the season of the feet of the feet of the season of the feet of the season of the feet Consider the State South of the December of the the rong strain and its arrest of a good and to go are this of the world of world had to it skip me the the least of being a fill first told no an even on the field bear add about 1 that the to

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LETTER II.

MY DEAR SIR,

July 15, 1777.

T Begin with congratulations first to you and Mrs. -, on your fafe journey and good paffage over the formidable Humber. Mrs. - has another river to cross (may it be many years before she approaches the bank) over which there is no bridge. Perhaps at seasons she may think of it with that reluctance which she felt before she saw the Humber; but as her fears were then agreeably difappointed, and she found the experiment, when called to make it, neither terrifying nor dangerous, fo I trust she will find it in the other case. Did not she think, The Lord knows where I shall be, and he will meet me there with a ftorm, because I am such a finner? Then how the billows will foam and rage at me, and what a long passage I shall have, and perhaps I shall fink in the middle and never fet my foot in Hull. It is true, I am not fo much afraid of the journey I go by land, tho' I know that every flep of the way the horses or the chaise may fall, and I be killed; but how do I know but he may preferve me on the road on purpose to drown me in the river? But behold, when she came to it all was calm; or what was better, a gentle, fair breeze, to waft her pleasantly over before she was aware. Thus we are apt perversely to reason: he guides and guards me through life; he gives me new mercies, and new proofs

proofs of his power and care every day; and therefore when I come to die he will forsake me, and let me be the fport of winds and waves. Indeed the Lord does not deserve such hard thoughts at our hands as we are prone to form of him. But notwithstanding we make such returns he is and will be gracious, and shame us out of our unkind, ungrateful, unbelieving fears at last. If, after my repeated kind reception at your house, I should always be teizing Mrs. - with suspicions of her good-will, and should tell every body I saw, that I verily believed the next time I went to fee her she would shut the door in my face and refuse . me admittance, would she not be grieved, offended and affronted? Would she not think, What reafon can he affign for this treatment? He knows I did every thing in my power to affure him of a welcome, and told him fo over and over again. Does he count me a deceiver? Yes, he does: I fee his friendship is not worth preserving; so farewell. I will feek friends among fuch as believe my words Well, my dear Madam, I am clear I always believed you; I make no doubt but you will treat me kindly next time, as you did the laft. But pray is not the Lord as worthy of being trufted as yourfelf; and are not his invitations and promifes as hearty and as honest as yours? Let us therefore beware of giving way to fuch thoughts of him, as we could hardly forgive in our dearest friends, if they should harbour the like of us.

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I have heard nothing of Mr. P—yet, but that he is in town, very bufy about that precious piece

of furniture called a wife. May the Lord direct and bless his choice. In Capt, Cook's voyage to the South Sea, some fish were caught which looked as well as others, but those who eat of them were poisoned: alas! for the poor man who catches a poisonous wife! There are such to be met with in the matrimonial feas, that look passing well to the eye, but a connection with them proves baneful to domestic peace, and hurtful to the life of grace. I know two or three people, perhaps a few more, who have great reason to be thankful to him who fent the fifh, with the money in its mouth, to Peter's hook. He fecretly inftructed and guided us where to angle; and if we have caught prizes we owe it not to our own skill, much less to our deferts, but to his goodness.

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LETTER III.

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MY DEAR SIR,

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Sept. 40 1777.

Poor little boy! it is mercy indeed that he recovered from such a formidable hurt. The Lord wounded, and the Lord healed. I ascribe. with you what the world calls accident to him, and believe that without his permission, for wife and good ends, a child can no more pull a bowl of boiling water on itself than it could pull the moon out of its orbit. And why does he permit fuch things? One reason or two is sufficient for us: it is to remind us of the uncertainty of life and all creature comforts; to make us afraid of cleaving too close to pretty toys, which are so precarious, that often while we look at them they vanish, and to lead us to a more entire dependence upon himfelf; that we might never judge ourfelves or our concerns fafe from outward appearances only, but that the Lord is our keeper, and were not his eye upon us, a thousand dangers and painful changes, which we can neither foresee nor prevent, are lurking about us every ftep, ready to break in upon us every hour. Men are but children of a larger growth. How many are labouting and planning in the pursuit of things, the event of which, if they obtain them, will be but like pulling scalding . water upon their own heads. They must have the bowl by all means, but they are not aware what is in it till they feel it. " to the total more : Aini

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LETTER IV.

THE HARRY TO KNOW BOOK TO AN

SIR

July 7, 1777.

Have had a letter from your minister fince his I arrival at ____. I hope he will be restored to you again before long, and that he and many of your place will rejoice long in each other. Those are favoured places which are bleffed with a found and faithful Gospel ministry, if the people know and confider the value of their privileges, and are really defirous of profiting by them : but the kingdom of God is not in word but in power. those who profess the Gospel with you will wrestle in prayer for grace to walk worthy of it. nister's hands are strengthened, when he can point to his people as so many living proofs, that the doctrines he preaches are doctrines according to godlines; when they walk in mutual love, when each one in their feveral places manifests an humble, spiritual, upright conduct; when they are Christians, not only at church but in the family, the shop, and the field; when they fill up their relations in life, as husbands or wives, masters or fervants, parents or children, according to the rule of the word; when they are evidently a people feparated from the world while convergant in it, and are careful to let their light shine before men, not only by talking, but by acting as the disciples of Christ: when they go on steadily, not by fits and ftarts, LETTER

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I am yours.

flarts, prizing the means of grace without refting in them: when it is thus, we can fay, Now we ive, if you fland fall in the Lord. Then we came forth with pleafale, and our fervice is our delight, and we are encouraged to hope for an inceeding bleding. But if the people in whom we have rejojeced fink into formality or a world w foirit; If they have diffentions and jealoufies among cheenfelves, if they ach improperly, and give the error nies o cafen was. There, Thurs, to would we one is, then out bear a me a counded and our real danged, and we know oot how to fpeak with the berty. It is my haart's doing and prayer for your, that whather I fee you or elfe be ablent from you! may kinfor hat you thand fall in one fairt and one med the ing regeries for the faith of the Consist some that it is a second to be a

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My DEAR MADAM, To all acque son q

Let what has been faid on the subject of acquaintance, &c. suffice. It was well meant on my side, and well taken on yours. You may perhaps see that my hints were not wholly unnecessary, and I ought to be satisfied with your apology, and am so. The circumstance of your being seen at the play-house has nothing at all mysterious in it, as you say you have not been there these six or seven years; it was neither more nor less than a mistake. I heard you had been there within these two years: I am glad to find I was missinformed. I think there no is harm in your supposing, that of the many thousands who frequent public diversions some may in other respects be better than yourself: but I hope your humble and charitable construction

K 4

of their mistake will not lead you to extenuate the evil of those diversions in themselves. For though I am perfuaded that a few, who know better what to do with themselves, are for want of consideration drawn in to expose themselves in such places, yet I am well satisfied, that if there is any practice in this land finful, attendance on the play-house is properly and eminently fo. The theatres are fountains and means of vice; I had almost faid in the fame manner and degree as the ordinances of the Gospel are the means of grace: and I can hardly think there is a Christian upon earth who would dare to be seen there, if the nature and effects of the theatre were properly fet before them. Dr. Witherspoon of Scotland has written an excellent piece upon the stage, or rather against it, which I wish every person who makes the least pretence to fear God had an opportunity of perufing. I cannot judge much more favorably of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and all the innumerable train of diffipations by which the God of this world blinds the eyes of multitudes, left the light of the glorious Gospel should shine in upon them. What an awful aspect upon the present times have such texts as Isa. xxii. 12-14. ch. iii. 12. Amos 6, 3-6. Fames iv. 4. I wish you therefore not to plead for any of them, but use all your influence to make them shunned as pest-houses, and dangerous nuifances to precious fouls. Especially if you know any who you hope in the main are ferioufly difposed, who yet venture themselves in those purlieus

of Satan, endeavour earnestly and faithfully to un-

The time is short; eternity at the door: was there no other evil in these vain amusements than the loss of precious time (but alas ! their name is legion) we have not leifure in our circumstances to regard them. And, bleffed be God ! we need them not. The Golpel opens a fource of purer, fweeter, and more substantial pleasures: we are invited to communion with God; we are called to share in the theme of angels, the fongs of heaven, and the wonders of redeeming love are laid open to our The Lord himself is waiting to be gracious, waiting; with promises and pardons in his hands. Well then may we bid adieu to the perishing pleafures of fin; well may we pity those who can find pleasure in those places and parties where he is shut out; where his name is only mentioned to be prophaned; where his commandments are not only broken but infulted; where finners proclaim their shame as in Sodom, and attempt not to hide it; where at best wickedness is wrapt up in a disguise of delicacy to make it more infinuating, and nothing is offensive that is not grosly and unpolitely indecent.

I sympathize with all your complaints; but if the Lord is pleased to make them subservient to the increase of your fanctification, to wean you more and more from this world, and to draw you nearer to himself, you will one day see cause to be thankful for them, and to number them amongst your thousand the choicest

Alaman's

choicest mercies. A hundred years hence it will fignify little to you whether you were fick or well

We thank you for your kind condolence. There is a pleafure in the pity of a friend, but the Lord alone can give true comfort. I hope he will fanctify the breach, and do us good. Mrs. exchanges forgiveness with you about your not meeting in London: that is, you forgive her not coming to you, and the forgives you entertaining a suspicious thought of her friendship (though but for a minute) on account of what the was really unable to do wife white wall

the or the west of the second was the than नीहर वर्षीय एक विकास के वर्षा है है है है के महिला के महिला out, where the liters will all melacioness to be proschand; where his commendancerts are not only stoken by a landfee; where immer proclaim this maner as in bodom, and attempt notice talk it is where at best workedness to wrapt up in a stay of office care to make it mere infinistings planted diese is advantage that a age group and an extend the same a new countries of the same and A compathing nother the your complaints; and if the Land is pleased to another them labeley and to the nor le of your finithication, to wear ponincire and more from this world, god to draw you depret. which is your yell one day the cause to be that it.

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LETTER II.

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MY DEAR MADAM,

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Sept. 1, 1767.

T Shall not study for expressions to tell my dear I friend how much we were affected by the news that came last post. We had however the pleasure to hear that your family was safe. I hope this will find you recovered from the hurry of spirits you must have been thrown into, and that both you and your papa are composed under the appointment of him who has a right to dispose of his own as he pleases; for we know that whatever may be the second causes and occasions, nothing can happen to us but according to the will of our heavenly Father, Since what is past cannot be recalled, my part is now to pray, that this and every other dispensation you meet with may be fanctified to your foul's good; that you may be more devoted to the God of your life, and have a clearer fense of your interest in that kingdom which cannot be shaken, that treasure which neither thieves nor flames can touch, that better and more enduring substance which is laid up for believers, where Jesus their head and savior is. With this in view, you may take joyfully the spoiling of your goods.

I think I can feel for my friends; but for such as I hope have a right to that promise, that all things shall work together for their good, I soon check my solicitude, and ask myself, Do I love them better,

or could I manage more wifely for them than the Lord does? Can I wish them to be in safer or more compassionate hands than in his? Will he who delights in the prosperity of his servants assist them with sickness, losses and alarms, except he sees there is need of these things? Such thoughts calm the emotions of my mind. I sincerely condole you; but the command is to rejoice always in the Lord. The visitation was accompained with mercy. Not such a case as that of the late Lady Molesworth's, which made every one's ears to tingle that heard it. Nor is yours such a case as of some, who in almost every great fire lose their all, and perhaps have no knowledge of God to support them.

Though our first apprehensions were for you, we almost forgot you for a moment when we thought of your next door neighbour, and the circumstance she was in, so unsit to bear either a fright or a removal. We shall be in much suspense till we hear from you. God grant that you may be able to send us good news, that you are all well, at least as well as can be expected after such a distressing scene. If what has happened should give you more leifure or more inclination to spend a little time with us, I think I need not say we shall rejoice to receive you.

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LETTER III.

MY DEAR MADAM,

HE vanity of all things below is confirmed to us by daily experience. Amongst other proofs, one is the precariousness of our intimacies. and what little things, or rather what nothings, will fometimes produce a coolness, or at least a ftrangeness between the dearest friends. How is it that our correspondence has been dropt, and that after having written two letters fince the fire, which removed you from your former residence, I should be still disappointed in my hopes of an answer? On our parts I hope there has been no abatement of regard, nor can I charge you with any thing but remissiness. Therefore waving the past, and all apologies on either fide, let me beg you to write foon, to tell us how it is with you, and how you have been supported under the various changes you have met with fince we faw you last. I doubt not but you have met with many exercises. I pray that they may have been fanctified to lead you nearer to the Lord, the fountain of all confolation; who is the only refuge in time of troubles, and whose gracious presence is abundantly able to make up every deficiency and every loss. Perhaps the reading of this may recall to your mind our past conversations, and the subjects of the many letters we have exchanged. I know not in what manner to write after so long an interval. I would hope your silence to us has not been owing to any change of sentiments, which might make such letters as mine less welcome to you. Yet when you had a friend who I think you believed very nearly interested himself in your welfare, it seems strange that in a course of two years you should have nothing to communicate. I cannot suppose you have forgotten me; I am sure I have not forgotten you; and therefore I long to hear from you soon, that I may know how to write; and should this likewise pass unanswered, I must sit down and mourn over my loss.

As to our affairs, I can tell you the Lord has been and is exceedingly gracious to us: our lives are preserved; our healths continued; an abundance of mercies and bleffings on every fide : but especially we have to praise him that he is pleased to crown the means and ordinances of his grace with tokens of his prefence. It is my happiness to be fixed amongst an affectionate people, who make an open profession of the truth as it is in Jesus, and are enabled in some measure to shew forth its power in their lives and conversation. We walk in peace and harmony. I have reason to say the Lord Jesus is a good mafter, and that the doctrine of free falvation by faith in his name is a doctrine according to godliness; for through mercy I find it daily effectual to the breaking down the ftrong holds of fin, and turning the hearts of finners from dead works to ferve the living God. May the Lord give my dear friend to live in the power and confolation of his precious truth. I am, dear Madam, Sept. 3, 1767. Your affectionate and obliged, &c.

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LETTER I.

T Can truly fay that I bear you upon my heart and I in my prayers. I have rejoiced to fee the beginning of a good and gracious work in you, and I have confidence in the Lord Jesus that he will carry it on and compleat it, and that you will be amongst the number of those who shall fing redeeming love to eternity. Therefore fear none of the things appointed for you to fuffer by the way, but gird up the loins of your mind and hope to the end. Be not impatient, but wait humbly upon the Lord. You have one hard lesson to learn, that is the evil of your own heart: you know something of it, but it is needful that you should know more; for the more we know of ourselves, the more we shall prize and love Jesus and his salvation. I hope what you find in yourfelf by daily experience will humble

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you, but not discourage you; humble you it should, and I believe it does. Are not you amazed fometimes that you should have so much as a hope, that poor and needy as you are the Lord thinketh of you? But let not all you feel discourage you; for if our physician is almighty, our disease cannot be desperate, and if he casts none out that come to him why should you fear? Our fins are many, but his mercies are more: our fins are great, but his righteousness is greater: we are weak, but he is power. Most of our complaints are owing to unbelief, and the remainder of a legal spirit; and these evils are not removed in a day. Wait on the Lord, and he will enable you to fee more and more of the power and grace of our high prieft. The more you know him, the better you will trust him; the more you trust him, the better you will love him; the more you love him, the better you will ferve him. This is God's way : you are not called to buy, but to beg; not to be strong in your self, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He is teaching you these things, and I trust he will teach you to the end. Remember, the growth of a believer is not like a mushroom, but like an oak, which increases slowly indeed but furely. Many funs, showers, and frosts pass upon it before it comes to perfection; and in winter, when it feems dead, it is gathering strength at the root. Be humble, watchful, and diligent in the means, and endeavour to look through all and fix your eye upon Jesus, and all shall be well. I commend you to the care of the good shepherd, and remain for his sake 18 March, 1767. Your affectionate friend.

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Was forry I did not write as you expected, but I hope it will do now. Indeed I have not forgotten you; you are often in my thoughts, and seldom omitted in my prayers. I hope the Lord will make what you fee and hear while abroad profitable to you, to increase your knowledge, to strengthen your faith, and to make you from henceforth well fatisfied with your fituation. If I am not mistaken you will be sensible, that though there are some desirable things to be met with in London preferable to any other place, yet upon the whole a quiet fituation in the country, under one stated ministry and in connection with one people, has the advantage. It is pleafant now and then to have opportunity of hearing a variety of preachers, but the best and greatest of them are no more than instruments; some can please the ear better than others, but none can reach the heart any farther than the Lord is pleased to open it. This he shewed you upon your first going up, and I doubt not but your disappointment did you more good than if you had heard with all the pleasure you

The Lord was pleased to visit me with a slight illness in my late journey. I was far from well on the Tuesday, but supposed it owing to the fatigue of riding and the heat of the weather; but the next

day I was taken with a shivering, to which a fever fucceeded. I was then near fixty miles from home. The Lord gave me much peace in my foul, and I was enabled to hope he would bring me fafe home, in which I was not disappointed: and though I had the fever most part of the way, my journey was not unpleasant. He likewise strengthened me to preach twice on Sunday, and at night I found myself well, only very weary, and I have continued well ever fince. I have reason to speak much of his goodness, and to kis the rod, for it was fweetened with abundant mercies. I thought that had it been his pleasure I should have continued fick at Oxford, or even have died there, I had no objection. Though I had not that joy and fenfible comfort which some are favoured with, yet I was quite free from pain, fear and care, and felt myself sweetly composed to his will, whatever it. might be. Thus he fulfils his promise in making our strength equal to our day, and every new trial gives us a new proof how happy it is to be enabled to put our trust in him.

I hope in the midst of all your engagements you find a little time to read his good word, and to wait at his mercy seat. It is good for us to draw night to him. It is an honor that he permits us to pray, and we shall surely find he is a God hearing prayer. Endeavour to be diligent in the means, yet watch and strive against a legal spirit, which is always aiming to represent him as a hard master, watching as it were to take advantage of us. But it is far otherwise. His name is Love: he looks upon us with

with compassion; he knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust; and when our infirmities prevail he does not bid us despond, but reminds us that we have an advocate with the Father, who is able to pity, to pardon, and to fave to the uttermoft. Think of the names and relations he bears. Does he not call himself a Savior, a Shepherd, a Friend and a Husband? Has he not made known unto us his love, his blood, his righteousness, his promises, his power and his grace, and all for our encouragement? Away then with all doubting, unbelieving thoughts; they will not only diffress your heart but weaken your hands. Take it for granted upon the warrant of his word that you are his, and he is yours; that he has loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore in loving kindness has drawn you to himself; that he will surely accomplish that which he has begun, and that nothing which can be named or thought of shall ever be able to separate you from him. This perfuation will give you strength for the battle; this is the shield which will quench the hery darts of Satan; this is the helmet which the enemy cannot pierce. Whereas if we go forth doubting and fearing, and are afraid to trust any farther than we can feel, we are weak as water, and eafily overcome. Be strong therefore, not in yourself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Pray for me, and believe me to be

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May 31, 1769. Your very affectionate.

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Think you would hardly expect me to write if I you knew how I am forced to live at London. However, I would have you believe I am as willing to write to you as you are to receive my letters. As a proof, I try to fend you a few lines now. though I am writing to you and talking to Mrs. both at once ! and this is the only feafon ! can have to change a few words with her. She is a woman of a forrowful spirit: she talks and weeps, I believe the would think herfelf happy to be fituated as you are, notwithstanding the many advantages the has at London. I fee daily, and I hope you have likewife learnt, that places and outward circumstances cannot of themselves either hinder or help us in walking with God. So far as he is pleased to be with us, and to teach us by his Spirit, wherever we are we shall get forward; and if he does not bless us and water us every moment, the more we have of our own wishes and wills, the more uneafy we shall make ourselves.

One thing is needful; an humble, dependent spirit, to renounce our own wills, and give up ourselves to his disposal without reserve; this is the path of peace: and it is the path of safety; for he has said, The meek he will teach his way, and those who yield up themselves to him he will guide with his eye. I hope you will fight and pray against every rising of a murmuring spirit, and be thankful for

for the great things which he has already done for you. It is good to be humbled for fin, but not to be discouraged; for though we are poor creatures, Jesus is a compleat Savior, and we bring more honor to God, by believing in his name and trusting his word of promise, than we could do by a thousand outward works.

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I pray the Lord to shine upon your soul, and to fill you with all joy and peace in believing. Remember to pray for us, that we may be brought home to you in peace.

March 14. band by I am yours affectionately.

which came the upon mind, which crove a Tim. I. id. Thus I fet off by a semure, bover, no seconce but in the Lords overey and faireneity and includ why rater can we will for form to a world I fire barrege Boldet emplications I brief been favoured with more liberty. War do - mas and to the attliff ins an vinO ! Salti were liet I nell, to encorrage you co not your strong to in hum. and makes be effect, even when the fact you own weakers with the filter could find be high the standard never more love, never stave more region to which the book and a unity route which a sec made a will this we can do coming without him. This is a the lefton Paul letting to rejoice in his car a powerty and empanieds, that the power of Garif on it inte used that Coule Lat lave done any the Later I disgrice to the terminate the second stable set

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TOU fee I am mindful of my promise, and I glad should I be to write something that the Lord may be pleafed to make a word in feafon. I went yesterday into the pulpit very dry and heart. less. I feemed to have fixed upon a text, but when I came to the pinch it was fo thut up that I could not preach from it. I had hardly a minute to choose, and therefore was forced to snatch at that which came first upon my mind, which proved 2 Tim. i. 12. Thus I fet off at a venture, having no resource but in the Lord's mercy and faithfulness; and indeed what other can we wish for? Prefently my subject opened, and I know not when I have been favoured with more liberty. Why do I tell you this? Only as an instance of his goodness, to encourage you to put your strength in him, and not to be afraid, even when you feel your own weakness and insufficiency most sensibly. We are never more safe, never have more reason to expect the Lord's help, than when we are most sensible. that we can do nothing without him. This was the lesson Paul learnt, to rejoice in his own poverty and emptiness, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Could Paul have done any thing, Jesus would not have had the honour of doing all. This way of being faved entirely by grace, from first to last, is contrary to our natural wills; it mortifies felf, leaving it nothing to boast of, and through the remains

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remains of an unbelieving, legal spirit, it often seems discouraging. When we think ourselves so utterly helpless and worthless, we are too ready to sear that the Lord will therefore reject us; whereas in truth such a poverty of spirit is the best mark we can have of an interest in his promises and care.

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How often have I longed to be an instrument of establishing you in the peace and hope of the Gospel, and I have but one way of attempting it, by telling you over and over of the power and grace of Jesus. You want nothing to make you happy, but to have the eyes of your understanding more fixed upon the Redeemer, and more enlightened by the Holy Spirit to behold his glory. O he is a fuitable Savior! he has power, authority, and compassion to fave to the uttermost. He has given his word of promife to engage our confidence, and he is able and faithful to make good the expectations and desires he has raised in us. Put your trust in him; believe (as we fay) through thick and thin, in defiance of all objections from within and without. For this Abraham is recommended as a pattern to us. He overlooked all difficulties; he ventured and hoped even against hope, in a case which to appearance was desperate, because he knew that he who had promised was also able to perform.

Your fister is much upon my mind. Her illness grieves me; were it in my power I would quickly remove it: The Lord can, and I hope will, when it has answered the end for which he sent it. I trust he has brought her to us for good, and that she is chastised by him that she may not be con-

Vol. II. demned

demned with the world. I hope though the fays little she lifts up her heart to him for a bleffing, I wish you may be enabled to leave her and your. felf and all your concerns in his hands. He has a fovereign right to do with us as he pleases, and if we confider what we are, furely we shall confess we have no reason to complain: and to those who seek him his fovereignty is exercised in a way of grace. All shall work together for good: every thing is needful that he fends; nothing can be needful that he withholds. Be content to bear the cros; others have borne it before you. You have need of patience, and if you ask, the Lord will give it; but there can be no fettled peace till our will is in a measure subdued. Hide yourself under the shadow of his wings; rely upon his care and power; look upon him as a physician who has graciously undertaken to heal your foul of the worst of sicknesses, fin. Yield to his prescriptions, and fight against every thought that would represent it as defirable to be permitted to chuse for yourself. When you cannot see your way, be satisfied that he is your When your spirit is overwhelmed within you he knows your path: he will not leave you to He has appointed seasons of refreshment, and you shall find he does not forget you. Above all, keep close to the throne of grace. If we feem to get no good by attempting to draw near him, we may be fure we shall get none by keeping away from him.

London, Aug. 19, 1775. I am very fincerely yours.

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LETTER V.

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T Promised you another letter, and now for the performance. If I had faid, It may be, or Perhaps I will, you would be in suspence; but if I promise, then you expect that I will not disappoint you, unless something should render it imposfible for me to make my word good. I thank you for your good opinion of me, and for thinking I mean what I fay; and I pray that you may be enabled more and more to honor the Lord, by believing his promise: for he is not like a man that should fail or change, or be prevented by any thing unforeseen from doing what he has said. And yet we find it easier to trust to worms than to the God of truth. Is it not fo with you? And I can affure you it is often so with me. But here is the mercy. that his ways are above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. Though we are foolish and unbelieving, he remains faithful; he will not deny himself. I recommend to you especially that promife of God, which is so comprehensive that it takes in all our concernments, I mean, that all things shall work together for good. How hard is it to believe, that not only those things which are grievous to the flesh, but even those things which draw forth our corruptions, and discover to us what is in our hearts, and fill us with guilt and shame, should in the issue work for our good! Yet the Lord has faid it. All your pains and trials, all L 2 that that befals you in your own person, or that affects you upon the account of others, shall in the end prove to your advantage. And your peace does not depend upon any change of circumstances which may appear defirable, but in having your will bowed to the Lord's will, and made willing to fub. mit all to his disposal and management. Pray for this, and wait patiently for him, and he will do it. Be not furprifed to find yourfelf poor, helpless and vile; all whom he favors and teaches will find themselves so. The more grace increases, the more we shall see to abase us in our own eyes; and this will make the Savior and his falvation more precious to us. He takes his own wife methods to humble you and to prove you, and I am fure he will do you good in the end.

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LETTER VI.

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TTHEN you receive this I hope it will give Y you pleasure to think, that if the Lord be pleased to favor us with health we shall all meet again in a few days. I have met with much kindness at London, and many comforts and mercies; however, I shall be glad to return home. There my heart lives, let my body be where it will. long to fee all my dear people, and I shall be glad to see you. I steal a little time to write another line or two, more to fatisfy you than for any thing particular I have to fay. I thank you for your letter. I doubt not but the Lord is bringing you forward, and that you have a good right to fay to your foul, Why art thou cast down and disquieted? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him. An evil heart, an evil temper, and the many croffes we meet with in passing through an evil world, will cut us out trouble: but the Lord has provided a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care: the fruit of all is to take away fin, and the end of all will be eternal life in glory. Think of thefe words; put them in the balance of the fanctuary; and then throw all your trials into the opposite fcale, and you will find there is no proportion between them. Say then, Though he slay me I will trust in him, for when he has fully tried me I shall come forth like gold. You would have liked to have been with me last Wednesday. I preached at L 3 Westminster

Westminster Bridewell. It is a prison and house of correction. The bulk of my congregation were housebreakers, highwaymen, pickpockets, and poor unhappy women, such as infest the streets of this city, funk in fin and lost to shame. I had a hundred or more of these before me. I preached from I Tim. i. 15. and began with telling them my own flory: this gained their attention more than I expected. I spoke to them near an hour and a half, I fhed many tears myfelf, and faw some of them shed tears likewise. Ah! had you seen their present condition, and could you hear the history of some of them, it would make you fing, O to grace how great a debtor! By nature they were no worse than the most sober and modest people. And there was doubtless a time when many of them little thought what they should live to do and suffer. I might have been like them in chains, and one of them have come to preach to me, had the Lord so pleased. I am your fincere

Sept. 16, 1775.

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LETTER VII.

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Am just come from seeing A. N. The people told me she is much better than she was, but she is far from being well. She was brought to me into a parlour, which faved me the painful talk of going to enquire and feek for her among the patients. My spirits always fink when I am within those mournful walls, and I think no money could prevail on me to fpend an hour there every day. Yet furely no fight upon earth is more fuited to teach one thankfulness and resignation. Surely I have reason in my worst times to be thankful that I am out of hell, out of Bedlam, out of Newgate. If my eyes were as bad as yours, and my back worse, still I hope I should set a great value upon this mercy, that my fenfes are preferved. I hope you will think fo too. The Lord afflicts us at times, but it is always a thousand times less than we deserve, and much less than many of our fellow-creatures are suffering around us. Let us therefore pray for grace to be humble, thankful, and patient.

This day twelvemonth I was under Mr. W—'s knife: there is another cause for thankfulness, that the Lord inclined me to submit to the operation and brought me happily through it. In short, I have so many reasons for thankfulness that I cannot count them. I may truly say they are more in number than the hairs of my head. And yet, alas!

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how cold, insensible and ungrateful. I could make as many complaints as you; but I find no good by complaining, except to him who is able to help me. It is better for you and me to be admiring the compassion and fullness of grace that is in our Savior, than to dwell and pore too much upon our own poverty and vileness. He is able to help and save to the uttermost: there I desire to cast anchor, and wish you to do so likewise. Hope in God, for you shall yet praise him.

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LETTERS

TO

M R. C---

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LETTER I.

Lett war had bury to wron i and manged it wis to DEAR SIR,

THE death of a near relative called me from home in December, and a fortnight's absence threw me fo far behind-hand in my course, that I deferred acknowledging your letter much longer than I intended. I now thank you for it. I can fympathize with you in your troubles; yet knowing the nature of our calling, that by an unalterable appointment the way to the kingdom lies through many tribulations, I ought to rejoice rather than otherwise that to you it is given, not only to believe, but also to suffer. If you escaped these things, whereof all the Lord's children are partakers, might you not question your adoption into his family? How could the power of grace be manifest either to you, in you, or by you, without L6 afflictions?

afflictions? How could the corruptions and devastations of the heart be checked without a cross? How could you acquire a tenderness and skill in speaking to them that are weary, without a tafte of fuch trials as they also meet with? You could only be a hearfay witness to the truth, power, and sweetness of the precious promises, unless you have been in fuch a fituation as to need them, and to find their fuitableness and sufficiency. The Lord has given you a good desire to serve him in the Gospel, and he is now training you for that service. Many things, yea, the most important things belonging to the Gospel ministry, are not to be learned by books and fludy, but by painful experience. You must expect a variety of exercises; but two things he has promifed you, that you shall not be tried above what he will enable you to bear, and that all shall work together for your good. We read somewhere of a conceited orator who declaimed upon the management of war in the presence of Hannibal, and of the contempt with which Hannibal treated his performance. He deserved it; for how should a man who had never seen a field of battle be a competent judge of fuch a subject. Just fo, were we to acquire no other knowledge of the Christian warfare than what we could derive from cool and undisturbed study, instead of coming forth as able ministers of the New Testament, and competently acquainted with the Ta romaTa, with the devices, the deep laid counsels and stratagems of Satan, we should prove but mere declaimers. But the Lord will take better care of those whom he loves

loves and defigns to honor. He will try and permit them to be tried in various ways. He will make them feel much in themselves, that they may know how to feel much for others, according to that beautiful and expressive line,

Haud ignora mali miseris succurrere disco.

And as this previous discipline is necessary to enable us to take the field in a public capacity with courage, wisdom, and success, that we may lead and animate others in the fight, it is equally neceffary, for our own fakes, that we may obtain and preserve the grace of humility, which I perceive with pleasure he has taught you to set a high value upon. Indeed we cannot value it too highly; for we can be neither comfortable, fafe, nor habitually useful without it. The root of pride lies deep in our fallen nature, and where the Lord has given natural and acquired abilities it would grow apace, if he did not mercifully watch over us, and fuit his dispensations to keep it down. Therefore I trust he will make you willing to endure hardships, as a good foldier of Jesus Christ. May he enable you to behold him with faith holding out the prize, and faying to you, Fear none of these things that thou shalt suffer; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

We fail upon a turbulent and tumultuous fea, but we are embarked on a good bottom and in a good cause, and we have an infallible and almighty pilot, who has the winds and weather at his command, and can silence the storm into a calm with a word a word whenever he pleases. We may be persecuted, but we shall not be forsaken; we may be cast down, but we cannot be destroyed. Many will thrust fore at us that we may fall, but the Lord will be our stay.

I am forry to find you are quite alone at Cambridge, for I hoped there would be a fuccession of ferious students, to supply the place of those who are transplanted to shine as lights in the world. Yet you are not alone, for the Lord is with your the best counsellor and the best friend. There is a strange backwardness in us (at least in me) fully to improve that gracious intimacy to which he invites us. Alas! that we so easily wander from the fountain of life to hew out cifterns for ourselves. and that we feem more attached to a few drops of his grace in our fellow-creatures than to the fulness of grace that is in himself. I think nothing gives me a more striking sense of my depravity than my perverseness and folly in this respect : yet he bears with me and does me good continually.

Jan. 16, 1775. I am fincerely yours.

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LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

T Know not the length of your college terms, but hope this may come time enough to find you still refident. I shall not apologize for writing no fooner, because I leave other letters of much longer date unanswered that I may write fo foon. It gave me particular pleasure to hear that the Lord helped you through your difficulties and fucceeded your defires. And I have sympathized with you in the complaints you make of a dark and mournful frame of spirits afterwards. But is not this upon the whole right and falutary, that if the Lord is pleafed at one time to ftrengthen us remarkably in answer to prayer, he should leave us at another time, so far as to give us a real fenfibility that we were supported by his power, and not our own? Befides, as you feel a danger of being elated by the respect paid you, was it not a merciful and feafonable dispensation that made you feel your own weakness, to prevent your being exalted above measure? The Lord, by withdrawing his fmiles from you. reminded you that the smiles of men are of little value, otherwise perhaps you might have esteemed them too highly. Indeed you scholars that know the Lord are fingular instances of the power of his grace, for (like the young men in Dan. iii.) you live in the very midst of the fire. Mathematical **ftudies**

studies in particular have such a tendency to engross and fix the mind to the contemplation of cold and uninteresting truth, and you are surrounded with so much intoxicating applause if you succeed in your refearches, that for a foul to be kept humble and alive in fuch a fituation is fuch a proof of the Lord's presence and power, as Moses had when he faw the bush unconsumed in the midst of the slames. I believe I had naturally a turn for the mathematics myself, and dabbled in them a little way; and though I did not go far, my head sleeping and waking was stuffed with diagrams and calculations. Every thing I looked at that exhibited eithera right-line or a curve fet my wits a wool-gathering. What then must have been the case had I proceeded to the interior arcana of speculative geometry? I bought my name-sake's Principia, but I have reafon to be thankful that I left it as I found it, a fealed book, and that the bent of my mind was drawn to fomething of more real importance before I understood it. I say not this to discourage you in your pursuits; they lie in your line and path of duty, in mine they did not. As to your academics, I am glad that the Lord enables you to shew those among whom you live, that the knowledge of his Gospel does not despoil you either of diligence or acumen. However, as I said, you need a double guard of grace, to preserve you from being either puffed up or deadened by those things, which, considered in any other view than quoad boc, to preserve your rank and character in the university while you remain there, are, if taken in the aggregate, little better better than a splendidum nihil. If my poor people at — could form the least conception of what the learned at Cambridge chiefly admire in each other, and what is the intrinsic reward of all their toil, they would say (supposing they could speak Latin) Quam suave istis suavitatibus carere! How gladly would some of them, if such mathematical and metaphysical lumber could by any means get into their heads, how gladly would they drink at Lethe's stream to get it out again! How many perplexities are they freed from by their happy ignorance, which often pester those to their lives end who have had their natural proneness to vain reasoning sharpened by academical studies.

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March, 1776.

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LETTER III.

DEAR SIR.

THOUGH I wished to hear from you sooner. I put a candid interpretation upon your filence, was fomething apprehensive for your health, but felt no disposition to anger. Let our correspondence be free from fetters. Write when you please and when you can: I will do the like. Apologies may be spared on both sides. I am not a very punctual correspondent myself, having so many letters to write, and therefore have no right to stand

upon punctilios with you.

I sympathize with you in your forrow for your friend's death. Such cases are very distressing! But fuch a case might have been our own. Let us pray for grace to be thankful for ourselves, and fubmit every thing in humble filence to the fovereign Lord, who has a right to do as he pleases with his own. We feel what happens in our own little connections; but O the dreadful mischief of fin! Instances of this kind are as frequent as the hours, the minutes, perhaps the moments of every day: and though we know but one in a million, the fouls of others have an equal capacity for endless happiness or misery. In this situation the Lord has honored us with a call to warn our fellow finners of their danger, and to set before them his free and fure falvation; and if he is pleafed to make us instrumental

instrumental of snatching but one as a brand out of the fire, it is a service of more importance than to be the means of preserving a whole nation from temporal ruin. I congratulate you upon your admission into the ministry, and pray him to savor you with a single eye to his glory, and a fresh anointing of his holy Spirit, that you may come forth as a scribe well instructed in the mysteries of his kingdom, and that his word in your mouth may abun-

dantly prosper.

I truly pity those who rise early and take late rest and eat the bread of carefulness, with no higher prize and prospect in view than the obtaining of academical honors. Such pursuits will ere long appear (as they really are) vain as the sports of children. May the Lord impress them with a noble ambition of living to and for him. If these adventurers, who are labouring for pebbles under the femblance of goodly pearls, had a discovery of the pearl of great price, how quickly and gladly would they lay down their admired attainments, and become fools that they might be truly wife! What a fnare have you escaped! You would have been poorly content with the name of a mathematician or a poet, and looked no farther, had not he vifited your heart and enlightened you by his grace. Now I trust you account your former gain but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ the Lord. What you have attained in a way of literature will be useful to you if sanctified, and chiefly so by the knowledge you have of its infufficiency to any valuable

valuable purpose, in the great concerns of walking

with God and winning fouls.

I am pleased with your fears lest you should not be understood in your preaching. Indeed there is a danger of it. It is not easy for persons of quick parts duly to conceive how amazingly ignorant and flow of apprehension the bulk of our congregations generally are. When our own ideas are clear and our expressions proper, we are ready to think we have sufficiently explained ourselves; and yet perhaps nine out of ten (especially of those who are destitute of spiritual light) know little more of what we fay than if we were speaking Greek. A degree of this inconvenience is always inseparable from written discourses. They cast our thoughts into a stile which, though familiar to ourselves, is too remote from common conversation to be comprehended by narrow capacities; which is one chief reason of the preference I give, cæteris paribus, to extempore preaching. When we read to the people, they think themselves less concerned in what is offered than when we speak to them point blank. It feems a good rule which I have met with fomewhere, and which perhaps I have mentioned to you, to fix our eyes upon some one of the auditory whom we judge of the least capacity; if we can make him understand, we may hope to be understood by the rest. Let those who seek to be admired for the exactness of their compositions enjoy the poor reward they aim at. It is best for Gospet preachers to speak plain language. If we thus fingly

fingly aim at the glory of our mafter and the good of fouls, we may hope for the accompanying power of his Spirit, which will give our discourses a weight and energy that Demosthenes had no conception of.

I can give you no information of a curacy in a better fituation. But either the Lord will provide you one, or I trust he will give you usefulness and a competency of health and spirits where you are. He who caused Daniel to thrive upon pulse can make you strong and chearful even in the Fens, if he sees that best for you. All things obey him, and you need not sear but he will enable you for whatever service he has appointed you to perform.

This letter has been a week in hand: many interruptions from without and indispositions within. I seem to while away my life, and shall be glad to be saved upon the sooting of the thief upon the cross, without any hope or plea but the power and grace of Jesus, who has said, I will in no wise cast out. Adieu.

May, 18, 1776. Pray for yours fincerely.

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LETTER IV.

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DEAR SIR,

T Was glad to hear from you at last, not being willing to think myself forgotten. I supposed you were ill. It feems by your account that you are far from well; but I hope you are as well as you ought to be, that is, as well as the Lord fees it good for you to be. I fay I hope so, for I am not fure that the length and vehemence of your fermons, which you tell me aftonish many people, may not be rather improper and imprudent, confidering the weakness of your constitution; at least if this expression of yours be justly expounded by a report which has reached me, that the length of your fermons is frequently two hours, and the vehemence of your voice fo great that you may be heard far beyond the church walls. Unwilling should I be to damp your zeal, but I feel unwilling likewife that by excessive, unnecessary exertions you should wear away at once, and preclude your own usefulness. This concern is so much upon my mind that I begin with it, though it makes me skip over the former part of your letter; but when I have relieved myself upon this point, I can easily skip back again. I am perhaps the more ready to credit the report, because I know the spirits of you nervous people are highly volatile. I consider you as mounted upon a fiery steed, and provided you use

use due management and circumspection you travel more pleafantly than we plodding folks upon our fober, phlegmatic nags; but then, if instead of pulling the rein you plunge in the fpurs, and add wings to the wind, I cannot but be in pain for the consequences. Permit me to remind you of the Terentian adage, ne quid nimis. The end of speaking is to be heard, and if the person farthest from the preacher can hear, he speaks loud enough. Upon some occasions a few sentences of a discourse may be enforced with a voice still more elevated. but to be uncommonly loud from beginning to end is hurtful to the speaker, and I apprehend no way useful to the hearer. It is a fault which many inadvertently give into at first, and which many have repented of too late: when practice has rendered it habitual it is not eafily corrected. I know some think that preaching very loudly and preaching with power are fynonimous expressions, but your judgment is too good to fall in with that prejudice. If I was a good Grecian I would fend you a quotation from Homer, where he describes the eloquence of Nestor, and compares it, if I remember right, not to a thunder-storm or a hurricane, but to a fall of fnow, which though preffing, infinuating and penetrating, is fost and gentle. You know the passage: I think the simile is beautiful and expressive.

Secondly (as we fay) as to long preaching. There is still in being an old-fashioned instrument called an hour-glass, which in days of yore, before clocks and watches abounded, used to be the mea-

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fure of many a good fermon, and I think a tole. rable ffint. I cannot wind up my ends to my own fatisfaction in a much thorter time, nor am I pleased with myself if I greatly exceed it. If an angel was to preach for two hours, unless his hearers were angels likewise, I believe the greater part of them would wish he had done. It is a shame it should be so, but so it is, partly through the weakness and partly through the wickedness of the flesh, we can seldom stretch our attention to foiritual things for two hours together without cracking it and hurting its fpring; and when weariness begins edification ends. Perhaps it is better to feed our people like chickens, a little and often, than to cram them like turkeys, till they cannot hold one gobbet more. Besides, over long sermons break in upon family concerns, and often call off the thoughts from the fermon to the pudding at home, which is in danger of being over boiled. They leave likewise but little time for secret or family religion, which are both very good in their place, and are intitled to a share in the Lord's day. Upon the preacher they must have a bad effect, and tend to wear him down before his time: and I have known fome, by over-acting at first, have been conftrained to fit still and do little or nothing for months or years afterwards. I rather recommend to you the advice of your brother Cantab. Hobson the Carrier, So to set out that you may hold out to your journey's end.

Now if Fame with her hundred mouths has brought me a false report of you, and you are not guilty

guilty of preaching either too long or too loud, still I am not willing my remonstrance may stand for nothing. I desire you will accept it, and thank me for it, as a proof of my love to you, and likewise of the sincerity of my friendship; for if I had wished to slatter you I could easily have called another subject.

I have one more report to trouble you with because it troubles me, and therefore you must bear a part of my burden. Affure me it is false, and I will fend you one of the handsomest letters I can devise by way of thanks. It is reported then (but I will not believe it till you fay I must) that you fland upon your tiptoes, upon the point of being whirled out of our vortex, and hurried away comet-like into the regions of eccentricity: in plain English, that you have a hankering to be an Itinerant. If this be true, I will not be the first to tell it in St. John's college, or to publish it on the banks of Cam, left the mathematicians rejoice and the poets triumph. But to be serious, for it is a ferious subject; let me beg you to deliberate well, and to pray earnestly before you take this step. Be afraid of acting in your own spirit or under a wrong impression; however honestly you mean, you may be mistaken. The Lord has given you a little charge; be faithful in it, and in his good time he will advance you to a greater: but let his Providence evidently open the door for you, and be afraid of moving one step before the cloud and pillar. I have had my warm fits and defires of this fort in my time, but I have reason to be thankful VOL. II. M that

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that I was held in with a strong hand. I wish there were more itinerant preachers. If a man has grace and zeal and but little fund, let him go and diffuse the substance of a dozen sermons over as many counties: but you have natural and acquired abilities which qualify you for the more difficult, and, in my judgment, not less important station of a parochial minister. I wish you to be a burning, shining, fleady light. You may perhaps have less popularity, that is, you will be less exposed to the work. ings of felf and the fnares of Satan if you flay with us; but I think you may live in the full exercise of your gifts and graces, be more confistent with your voluntary engagements, and have more peace of mind and humble intercourse with God in watching over a flock which he has committed to you, than by forfaking them, to wander up and down the earth without a determined scope.

Thus far I have been more attentive to the utile than the dulce. I should now return to join you in celebrating the praises of poetry, and the other subjects of your letter, but time and paper fail together. Let me hear from you foon, or I shall fear I have displeased you, which, fond as I am of poetry, would give me more pain than I ever found pleasure in reading Alexander's Feast. Indeed I love you; I often measure over the walks we have taken together, and when I come to a favorite stile, or fuch a favorite spot upon the hill top, I am reminded of fomething that passed, and say, or at

least think, bic fetit C-

Sept. 10, 1777.

Yours indeed.

LETTER

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LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

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DY your flying letter from London, as well as D by your more particular answer to my last, I judge that what I formerly wrote will answer no other end than to be a testimony of my fidelity and friendship. I am ready to think you were so far determined before you applied to the Bishop, as to be rather pleased than disappointed by a refusal which seemed to afford you liberty to preach at large. As your testimonium was not countersigned, the confequence was no other than might have been expected. Yet I have been told (how true I know not) that the Bishop would have passed over the informality, if you had not, unasked by him, avowed yourself a Methodist. I think if you had been unwilling to throw hindrances in your own way, the most perfect simplicity would have required no more of you, than to have given a plain and honest answer to such questions as he might think proper to propose. You might have affisted Mr. ____ for a feafon without being in full orders, and you may still, if you are not resolved at all events to push out. He wrote to me about you, and you may eafily judge what answer I gave. I have heard from him a second time, and he laments that he cannot have you. I likewise lament that you cannot be with him. I think you would M 2 have

have loved him, and I hoped his acquaintance might not have proved unuseful to you.

If you have not actually passed the Rubicon, if there be yet room for deliberation, I once more intreat you to pause and consider. In many refpects I ought to be willing to learn from you, but in one point I have a little advantage of you; I am fome years older, both in life and in profession; and in this difference of time perhaps I have learned fomething more of the heart, the world, and the devices of Satan, than you have had opportunity I hope I would not damp your zeal, but I will pray the Lord to direct it into the best channel for permanent usefulness; I say permanent: I doubt not that you would be useful in the itinerant way, but I more and more observe great inconveniences follow in that way. Where you make a gathering of people others will follow you; and if they all possessed your spirit, and had your disinterested views, it might be well. But generally an able preacher only so far awakens people to a defire to hear as exposes them to the incursions of various winds of doctrine, and the attempts of injudicious pretenders, who will refemble you in nothing but your eagerness to post from place to place. From fuch measures in time proceed errors, parties, contentions, offences, enthusiasm, spiritual pride, and a noify, oftentatious form of godliness, but little of that power and life of faith which shews itself by humility, meekness and love.

A parochial minister who lives among his people, who sees and converses with them frequently, and exemplifies

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exemplifies his doctrine in their view by his practice, having knowledge of their states, trials, growth and dangers, fuits himself to their various occasions, and by the bleffing of God builds them up, and brings them forward in faith and holinefs. He is instrumental in forming their experience; he leads them to a folid, orderly, scriptural knowledge of divine things. If his name is not in fo many mouths as that of the Itinerant, it is upon the hearts of the people of his charge. He lives with them as a father with his children. steady, confistent behaviour filences in some meafure the clamours of his enemies; and the Lord opens him doors of occasional usefulness in many places, without provoking our superiors to discountenance other young men who are feeking Orders.

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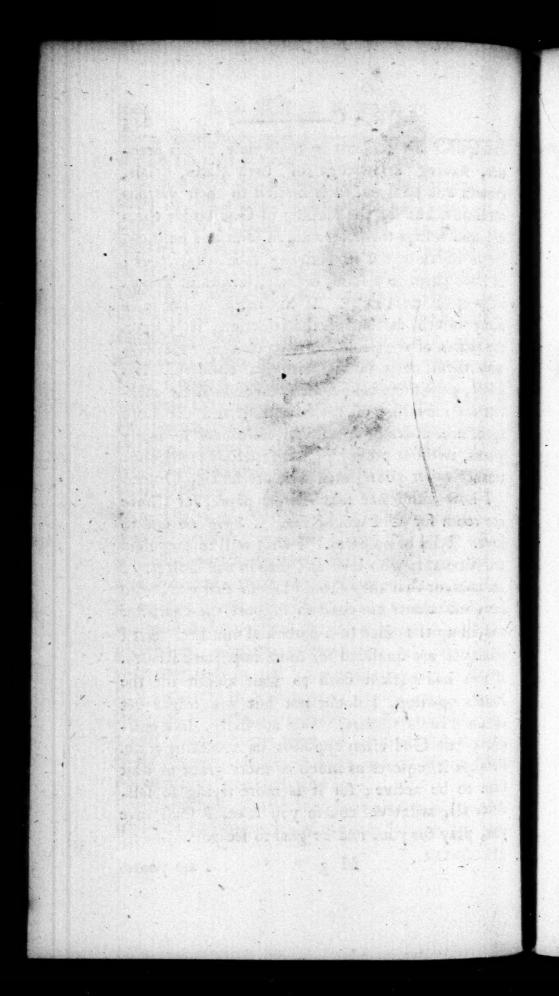
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I now wish I had taken larger paper, for I have not room for all I would fay. I have no end to ferve. I am of no party. I wish well to irregulars and itinerants who love and preach the Gospel. am content that they should labour that way, who have not talents nor fund to support the character and fill up the office of a parochial minister. But I think you are qualified for more important fervice. If you had patient faith to wait awhile for the Lord's opening, I doubt not but you might yet obtain Priests Orders. We are hasty, like children; but God often appoints us a waiting time. Perhaps it requires as much or more grace to wait than to be active; for it is more trying to felf. After all, whatever course you take, I shall love you, pray for you, and be glad to see you.

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I am yours.

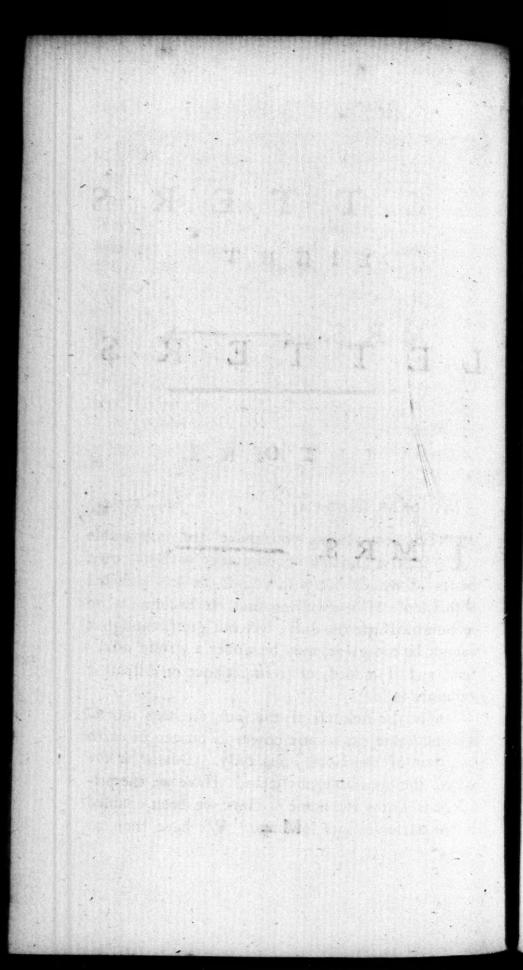


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LETTERS

TO

MRS.



LETTERS

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TO

M R S. —

LETTER I.

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MY DEAR MADAM,

July, 1764.

THE complaints you make are inseparable from a spiritual acquaintance with our own hearts: I would not wish you to be less affected with a sense of in-dwelling sin. It becomes us to be humbled into the dust; yet our grief, though it cannot be too great, may be under a wrong direction, and if it leads us to impatience or distrust it certainly is so.

Sin is the sickness of the soul, in itself mortal and incurable, as to any power in heaven or earth but that of the Lord Jesus only. But he is the great, the infallible physician. Have we the privilege to know his name? Have we been enabled to put ourselves into his hand? We have then no more to do but to attend his prescriptions, to be

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fatisfied with his methods, and to wait his time, It is lawful to wish we were well; it is natural to groan being burthened; but still he must and will take his own course with us; and however diffatisfied with ourselves, we ought still to be thankful that he has begun his work in us, and to believe that he will also make an end. Therefore while we mourn we should likewise rejoice; we should encourage ourselves to expect all that he has promifed, and we should limit our expectations by his promises. We are sure, that when the Lord delivers us from the guilt and dominion of fin, he could with equal ease free us entirely from fin if he pleased. The doctrine of finless persection is not to be rejected, as though it were a thing fimply impossible in itself, for nothing is too hard for the Lord, but because it is contrary to that method which he has chosen to proceed by. He has appointed that fanctification should be effected and fin mortified, not at once compleatly, but by little and little; and doubtless he has wife reasons for it. Therefore though we are to defire a growth in grace, we should at the same time acquiesce in his appointment, and not to be discoucouraged or despond, because we feel that conslict which his word informs us will only terminate with our lives.

Again, some of the first prayers which the Spirit of God teaches us to put up are for a clearer sense of the finfulness of fin, and our vileness on account of it. Now if the Lord is pleased to answer your prayers in this respect, though it will afford you cause

cause enough for humiliation, yet it should be received likewise with thankfulness, as a token for good. Your heart is not worse than it was formerly, only your spiritual knowledge is increased; and this is no small part of the growth in grace which you are thirsting after, to be truly humbled and emptied and made little in your own eyes.

Farther, the examples of the faints recorded in scripture prove (and indeed of the saints in general) that the greater measure any person has of the grace of God in truth, the more conscientious and lively they have been; and the more they have been favored with affurances of the Divine favor, fo much the more deep and fensible their perception of indwelling fin and infirmity has always been: so it was with Job, Isaiah, Daniel and Paul. likewise common to overcharge ourselves. Indeed we cannot think ourselves worse than we really are; yet fome things which abate the comfort and alacrity of our Christian profession are rather impediments than properly finful, and will not be imputed to us by him who knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust. Thus to have an infirm memory, to be subject to disordered, irregular, or low spirits, are faults of the constitution, in which the will has no share, though they are all burthensome and oppressive, and fometimes needlessly so, by our charging ourselves with guilt on their account. The same may be observed of the unspeakable and fierce suggestions of Satan with which some persons are pestered, but which shall be laid to him from M 6 whom

whom they proceed, and not to them who are troubled and terrified because they are forced to seel them. Lastly, it is by the experience of these evils within ourselves, and by seeling our utter insufficiency, either to perform duty or to withstand our enemies, that the Lord takes occasion to shew us the suitableness, the sufficiency, the freeness, the unchangeableness of his power and grace. This is the inference St. Paul draws from his complaints, Rom. vii. 25. and he learnt it upon a trying occasion from the Lord's own mouth, 2 Cor. xii. 8—q.

Let us then, dear Madam, be thankful and chearful, and while we take shame to ourselves let us glorify God, by giving Jesus the honour due to his name. Though we are poor, he is rich; though we are weak, he is ffrong; though we have nothing, he possesses all things. He suffered for us; he calls us to be conformed to him in furferings. He conquered in his own person, and he will make each of his members more than conquerors in due feafon. It is good to have one eye upon ourselves, but the other should ever be fixed on him who stands in the relation of Savior, Husband, Head and Shepherd: in him we have righteousness, peace and power: he can control all that we fear, fo that if our path should be through the fire or through the water, neither the flood shall drown us nor the flame kindle upon us, and ere long he will cut short our conflicts, and fay, Come up hither. "Then shall our grateful fongs abound, and every fear be wiped away." Having fuch

such promises and assurances, let us lift up our banner in his name, and press on through every discouragement.

With regard to company that have not a favor of the best things, as it is not your choice, I would advice you (when necessary) to bear it as a cross: we cannot fuffer by being where we ought to be, except through our own impatience; and I have an idea, that when we are providentially called amongst fuch (for fomething is due to friends and relations, whether they walk with us or no) that the hours need not be wholly loft: nothing can pass but may be improved; the most trivial conversation may afford us new views of the heart, new confirmation of scripture, and renew a sense of our obligations to diftinguishing grace, which has made us in any degree to differ. I would wish when you go amongst your friends that you do not confine your views to getting fafe away from them without loss, but entertain a hope that you may be fent to do some of them good. You cannot tell what effect a word or a look may have, if the Lord is pleased to bless it. I think we may humbly hope, that while we fincerely defire to please the Lord, and to be guided by him in all things, he will not fuffer us to take a journey, or hardly to make a short visit, which shall not answer some good purpose to ourselves or others, or both. While your gay friends affect an air of raillery, the Lord may give you a fecret witness in their consciences; and something they observe in you or hear from you may set them on thinking-

thinking perhaps after you are gone, or after the first occasion has entirely slipped your memory, Eccles. xi. 1. For my own part, when I confider the power, the freedom of divine grace, and how fovereign the Lord is in the choice of the inffrue ments and means by which he is pleafed to work. I live in hopes from day to day of hearing of wonders of this fort. I despair of nobody: and if I fometimes am ready to think fuch or fuch a perfonfeems more unlikely than others to be brought in. I relieve myself by a possibility that that very perfon, and for that very reason, may be the first instance. The Lord's thoughts are not like ours: in his love and in his ways there are heights which we cannot reach, depths which we-cannot fathom, lengths and breadths beyond the ken of our feeble fight. Let us then fimply depend upon him, and do our little best, leaving the event in his hand.

If these should be some of the last notes of this swan, I think them worth preserving. May we not with good reason say, Who would not be a Christian? The Lord grant that you and I, Madam, and yours and mine, may be happy in the same assurance, when we shall have death and eternity near in view.

I am yours, &c.

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LETTER II.

MY DEAR MADAM, Sept. 1764.

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TOUR welfare I rejoice in; your warfare I understand something of. St. Paul describes his own case in few words, Without were fight. ings, within were fears. Does not this comprehend all you would fay? And how are you to know experimentally either your own weakness, or the power, wisdom, and grace of God, seasonably and sufficiently afforded, but by frequent and various trials? How are the graces of patience, relignation, meekness and faith, to be discovered and increased but by exercise? The Lord has chosen, called, and armed us for the fight, and shall we wish to be excused? Shall we not rather rejoice that we have the honour to appear in such a cause, under fuch a Captain, fuch a banner, and in fuch company? A compleat fuit of armour is provided, weapons not to be refisted, and precious balm to heal us if haply we receive a wound, and precious ointment to revive us when we are in danger of fainting. Further, we are affured of the victory beforehand; and O what a crown is prepared for every conqueror, which Jesus, the righteous Judge, the gracious Savior, shall place upon every faithful head with his own hand! Then let us not be weary and faint, for in due feason we shall reap. The time is short; yet a little while, and the ftruggle, I

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firuggle of indwelling fin and the contradiction of furrounding finners shall be known no more. You are bleffed because you hunger and thirst after righteoufness; he whose name is Amen has said you shall be filled. To claim the promise is to make it our own; yet it is becoming us to practife submiffion and patience, not in temporals only, but also in spirituals. We should be ashamed and grieved at our flow progress, so far as it is properly chargeable to our remissiness and miscarriage, yet we must not expect to receive every thing at once, but wait for a gradual increase; nor should we forget to be thankful for what we may account a little, in comparison of the much we suppose others have received. A little grace, a spark of true love to God, a grain of living faith, though fmall as mustard feed, is worth a thousand worlds. One draught of the water of life gives interest in and earnest of the whole fountain. It becometh the Lord's people to be thankful; and to acknowledge his goodness in what we have received is the furest as well as the pleasantest method of obtaining more. Nor should the grief, arifing from what we know and feel of our own hearts, rob us of the honor, comfort and joy, which the word of God designs us, in what is there recorded of the person, offices, and grace of Jesus, and the relations he is pleased to stand in to his people, Pf. xxiii. 1. Ifa. liv. 5. Cant. v. 16. John xv. 15. I John ii. 1. John xv. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5. 1 Cor. i. 30. Matt. i. 21-23. Give me leave to recommend to your confideration Ps. lxxxix. 15-18. these verses may be called the Believer's Triumph:

Triumph: though they are nothing in themselves. yet having all in Jesus, they may rejoice in his name all the day: the Lord enable us fo to do! The joy of the Lord is the strength of his people; whereas unbelief makes our hands hang down and our knees feeble, dispirits ourselves and discourages others; and though it steals upon us under a semblance of humility, it is indeed the very effence of pride. By inward and outward exercises the Lord is promoting the best desire of your heart, and anfwering your daily prayers. Would you have affurance? The true folid affurance is to be obtained no other way. When young Christians are greatly comforted with the Lord's love and presence, their doubts and fears are for that feafon at an end. But this is not affurance: fo foon as the Lord hides his face they are troubled, and ready to question the very foundation of hope. Affurance grows by repeated conflict, by our repeated experimental proof of the Lord's power and goodness to save; when we have been brought very low and helped, forely wounded and healed, cast down and raised again, have given up all hope, and been fuddenly fnatched from danger and placed in fafety; and when thefe things have been repeated to us and in us a thoufand times over, we begin to learn to trust fimply to the word and power of God, beyond and against appearances; and this trust, when habitual and strong, bears the name of affurance; - for even affurance has degrees.

You have good reason, Madam, to suppose, that the Love of the best Christians to an unseen Savior

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is far short of what it ought to be. If your heart be like mine, and you examine your love to Christ by the warmth and frequency of your emotions towards him, you will often be in a fad fuspence whether or no you love him at all. The best mark to judge, and which he has given us for that purpose, is to enquire if his word and will have a prevailing, governing influence upon our lives and temper. If we love him, we do endeavour to keep his commandments: and it will hold the other way; if we have a defire to please him we undoubtedly love him. Obedience is the best test; and when amidst all our impersections we can humbly appeal concerning the fincerity of our views, this is a mercy for which we ought to be greatly thankful. He that has brought us to will will likewise enable us to do according to his good pleasure. I doubt not but the Lord whom you love, and on whom you depend, will lead you in a fure way, and establish and strengthen and settle you in his love and grace. Indeed he has done great things for you already. The Lord is your shepherd; a comprehensive word. The sheep can do nothing for themselves; the shepherd must guide, guard, feed, heal, recover. Well for us that our shepherd is the Lord almighty. If his power, care, compassion, fullness, were not infinite, the poor sheep would be forsaken, starved, and worried. But we have a shepherd full of care, full of kindness, full of power, who has said, I will feek that which was loft, and bind up that which was broken, and bring again that which was driven away, and will strengthen that which was fick.

fick. How tender are these expressions, and how well fulfilled! His sheep feed in the midst of wolves, yet are preserved safe; for though they see him not, his eye and his heart are upon them. Do we wonder that Daniel was preferved in the lion's den? Why it is a common case. Which of God's children have not cause to say, my soul is among lions? But the angel of the Covenant stops their mouths, or only permits them to gape and roar, to shew their teeth, and what they would do if they might; but they may not, they shall not bite and tear us at their own will. Let us trust him, and all shall be well.

As to daily occurrences, it is best to believe that a daily portion of comforts and croffes, each one the most suitable to our case, is adjusted and appointed by the hand which was once nailed to the cross for us; that where the path of duty and prudence leads, there is the best situation we could possibly be in at that juncture. We are not required to afflict ourselves immoderately for what is not in our power to prevent, nor should any thing that affords occasions for mortifying the spirit of self be accounted unnecessary.

I am yours.

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LETTER III.

1768.

Have been some time hoping to hear from you, but Mr. — was here last Saturday, and informed me that you were ill, or had been so very lately. This intelligence prompted me to write as soon as I could find leisure. I think the Lord has seen sit to visit you with much indisposition of late; I say be has seen sit, for all our trials are under his immediate direction, and we are never in heaviness without a need be. I trust he does and will give you strength equal to your day, and sweeten what would be otherwise bitter with the essence of his precious love. I hope soon to hear that you are restored to health, and that you have found cause to praise him for the rod.

How happy is the state of a believer, to have a sure promise that all shall work together for good in the end, and in the mean time a sure resuge where to find present relief, support and protection! How comfortable is it when trouble is near to know that the Lord is near likewise, and to commit ourselves and all our cares simply to him, believing that his eye is upon us, and his ear open to our prayers. Under the conduct of such a shepherd we need not fear, though we are called to pass through fire and water, through the valley of the shadow of death, he will be with us and will shew himself mighty

mighty on our behalf. It feems almost needless to fay, that we were very happy in the company of : the only inconvenience was, that it renewed the pain it always gives me to part with them. Though the vifit was full as long as I could possibly expect, it seemed very short. This must be the case while we are here; our pleasures are short, interrupted, and mixed with troubles; this is not, cannot be our rest. But it will not be always the case; we are travelling to a better world, where every evil and imperfection shall cease; then we shall be for ever with the Lord and with each other. May the prospect of this blessed hope set before us revive our fainting spirits, and make us willing to endure hardfhips as good foldiers of Jesus Christ. Here we must often sow in tears, but there we shall reap in joy, and all tears shall be wiped from our eyes for ever. I hope the conversation of friends whom I fo greatly love and honor afforded me not only pleasure but profit; it left a savor upon my mind, and stirred up my languid desires after the Lord. I wish I could say the good effect has remained with me to this hour, but alas! I am a poor creature, and have had many causes of humiliation fince. But, bleffed be God! amidst all my changes I find the foundation stands sure, and I am feldom or never left to doubt either of the Lord's love to me, or the reality of the defires he has given me towards himself; though when I measure my love by the degree of its exercise, or the fruits it produceth. I have reason to set down ashamed, as the chief of sinners and the least of all faints.

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faints. But in him I have righteousness and peace, and in him I must and will rejoice.

I would willingly fill up my sheet, but feel 2 ftraitness in my spirit, and know not what further O for a ray of divine light to fet me at liberty, that I might write a few lines worth reading, something that might warm my heart and comfort yours. Then the subject must be Jesus; but of him what can I fay that you do not know? Well, though you know him, you are glad to hear of him again and again. Come then, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. Let us adore him for his love, that love which has a height and depth and length and breadth, beyond the grasp of our poor conceptions: a love that moved him to empty himself, to take on him the form of a servant, and to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: a love that pitied us in our lost estate, that found us when we fought him not, that spoke peace to our souls in the day of our diffres: a love that bears with all our present weakness, mistakes, backslidings and short comings: a love that is always watchful, always ready to guide, to comfort and to heal: a love that will not be wearied, cannot be conquered, and is incapable of changes: a love that will in the end prevail over all opposition, will perfect that which concerns us, and will not leave us till it has brought us perfect in holiness and happiness, to rejoice in his prefence in glory. The love of Christ: it is the wonder, the joy, the fong of angels, and the fense of it shed the abroad in our hearts makes life pleasant and death welcome. Alas! what a heart have I that I love him no better! But I hope he has given me a desire to make him my all in all, and to account every thing loss and dross that dares to stand in competition with him.

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LETTER IV.

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1769.

T Found this morning among my unanswered let-I ters one from you, but hope I left it among them by mistake. I am willing however to be on the fure fide, and would rather write twice than be too long filent. I heard of your being laid on the bed of affliction, and of the Lord's goodness to you there, and of his raising you up again. Blessed be his name! he is all-sufficient and faithful; and though he cause grief, he is sure to shew compassion in supporting and delivering. Ah, the evil of our nature is deeply rooted and very powerful, or fuch repeated, continual corrections and chaftisements would not be necessary; and were they not necessary we should not have them. But such we are, and therefore such must be our treatment; for though the Lord loves us with a tenderness beyond what the mother feels for her fucking child, yet it is a tenderness directed by infinite wisdom, and very different from that weak indulgence which in parents we call fondness, which leads them to comply with their children's defires and inclinations, rather than to act with a fleady view to their true welfare. The Lord loves his children, and is very indulgent to them fo far as they can fafely bear it, but he will not spoil them. Their fin-fickness requires medicines, some of which are very unpalatable, but when the case calls for such, no short-sighted intreaties of ours can excuse us from taking what he Vol. II. N prepares

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prepares for our good. But every dose is prepared by his own hand, and not one is administered in vain, nor is it repeated any oftener than is needful to answer the purposed end. Till then, no other hand can remove what he lays upon us; but when his merciful design is answered, he will relieve us himself; and in the mean time he will so moderate the operation, or increase our ability to bear, that we shall not be overpowered. It is true, without a single exception, that all his paths are mercy and truth to them that fear him. His love is the same, when he wounds as when he heals, when he takes away as when he gives: we have reason to thank him for all, but most for the severe.

I received a letter from you which mentions Dear Mrs.—'s case, a very trying one; but in this likewise we see the Lord's faithfulness. Our own experience, and all that we observe of his dealings with others, may convince us that we need not be afraid to intrust ourselves and our dearest concerns in his hands, for he can and will make

every thing work for good.

PARTER SAVE

How little does the world know of that intercourse which is carried on between heaven and earth; what petitions are daily presented, and what answers are received at a throne of grace. O the blessed privilege of prayer! O the wonderful love, care, attention and power of our great shepherd. His eye is always upon us; when our spirits are almost overwhelmed within us, he knoweth our path. His ear is always open to us; let who will overlook and disappoint us, he will not. When means ed

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means and hope fail, when every thing looks dark upon us, when we feem that up on every fide, when we are brought to the lowest ebb, still our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. To him all things are possible, and before the exertion of his power, when he is pleafed to arise and work, all hindrances give way and vanish like a mist before the fun. And he can so manifest himself to the soul, and cause his goodness to pass before it, that the hour of affliction shall be the golden hour of the greatest consolation. He is the fountain of life, strength, grace and comfort, and of his fulness his children receive according to their occasions; but this is all hidden from the world; they have no guide in prosperity, but hurry on as they are infligated by their blinded passions, and are perpetually multiplying mifchiefs and miferies to themselves; and in adversity they have no resource, but must feel all the evil of affliction without inward fupport, and without deriving any advantage from it. We have therefore cause for continual praise. The Lord has given us to know his name, as a refting-place and a hiding-place, a fun and a thield. Circumstances and creatures may change, but he will be an unchangeable friend. The way is rough, but he trod it before us, and is now with us in every step we take, and every step brings us nearer to our heavenly home. Our inheritance is furely referved for us, and we shall be kept for it by his power through faith. Our prefent strength is small, and without a fresh supply would be quickly exhausted; but he has engaged to

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renew it from day to day, and he will foon appear to wipe all tears from our eyes, and then we shall

I am very forry if our friend Mr. - appears to be aiming to reconcile things that are incompatible, I am indeed afraid that he has been for fome time under a decline; and as you justly observe we meet with too many infrances to teach us, that they who express the warmest zeal at their first setting out do not always prove the most steady and thriving afterwards: yet I am willing to hope in this cafe that he will revive and flourish again. Sometimes the Lord permits those whom he loves to wander from him for a feafon, and when his time comes to heal their backflidings they walk more humbly, thankfully and fruitfully afterwards, from a fense of his abounding mercy, and the knowledge they have by experience acquired of the deceitfulness and ingratitude of their hearts. I hope and pray it will be fo with him. However, these things for the prefent are grievous, and usually before the Lord heals fuch breaches he makes his people sensible, that it is an evil and bitter thing to forfake him when he led them by the way.

Indeed London is a dangerous and infnaring place to professors. I account myself happy that my lot is cast at a distance from it. It appears to me like a sea, wherein most are tossed by storms, and many suffer shipwreck. In this retired situation I seem to stand upon a cliff, and while I pity those whom I cannot help, I hug myself in the thoughts of being safe upon the shore. Not that we are without our trials

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here; the evil of our own hearts and the devices of Satan cut us out work enough, but we are happily screened from many things which must be either burthensome or hurtful to those who live in the way of them; fuch as political disputes, winds of doctrine, scandals of false professors, parties for and against particular ministers, and fashionable amusements, in some measure countenanced by the presence of persons in other respects exemplary. In this view I often think of our dear friend's exprefsion, upon a certain occasion, of the difference between London and Country grace. I hold it in a two-fold sense. By London grace, when genuine, I understand grace in a very advanced degree. The favoured few who are kept alive to God; simplehearted and spiritually minded (I mean especially in genteel life) in the midst of such fnares and temptations appear to me to be the first-rate Christians of the Land: I adore the power of the Lord in them, and compare them to the young men who walked unhurt in the midst of the fire. In another fense, the phrase London grace conveys no great idea to me. I think there is no place in the kingdom where a person may set up for a professor upon a smaller stock. If people can abstain from open immoralities, if they will fly to all parts of the town to hear fermons; if they can talk about the doctrines of the Gospel; if they have something to fay upon that useless question, Who is the best preacher? if they can attain to a speaking acquaintance with some of an acknowledged character, then they expect to pass muster. I am asraid there N 3 are

are many who upon no better evidences than thefe deceive both themselves and others for a course of years. Though I feel not in a writing cue to-day. I have almost filled the sheet somehow; and if a line or a word may be a means of fuggefting a feafonable and comfortable thought to you, I have my end. Through mercy we are all pretty well. My foul is kept alive as it were by miracle. I feel much inward warfare; the enemy thrusts fore at me that I may fall, and I have abundant experience of the evil and deceitfulness of my heart; but the Lord is gracious, and in the midst of all conflicts I have a peace springing from the knowledge of his power and grace, and a confideration that I have been helped to commit myfelf to him, I am, &c.

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LETTER V.

1769.

W E are much obliged to you for your late visit, and I am glad to find that the Lord is pleased to give you some tokens of his presence when you are with us, because I hope it will encourage you to come again. I ought to be very thankful that our Christian friends in general are not wholly disappointed of a blessing when they visit us.

I hope the Lord will give me an humble fense of what I am, and that broken and contrite frame of heart in which he delights. This is to me the chief thing. I had rather have more of the mind that was in Christ, more of a meek, quiet, resigned, peaceful and loving disposition, than to enjoy the greatest measure of sensible comforts, if the consequence should be (as perhaps it would) spiritual pride, felf-fufficiency, and a want of that tenderness to others which becomes one who has reason to stile himself the chief of sinners. I know indeed that the proper tendency of fensible consolations is to humble; but I can fee, that through the depravity of human nature they have not always that effect. And I have been sometimes disgusted with an apparent want of humility, an air of felf-will and felf-importance, in persons of whose fincerity I could not at all doubt. It has kept me from envying them those pleasant frames with which they N 4 have

have sometimes been favoured; for I believe Satan is never nearer us than at some times when we think ourselves nearest the Lord.

What reason have we to charge our souls in David's words, My foul, wait thou only upon God. A great stress should be laid upon that word, only, We dare not entirely that him out of our regards. but we are too apt to suffer something to share with him. This evil disposition is deeply fixed in our hearts, and the Lord orders all his dispensations towards us with a view to rooting it out; that being wearied with repeated disappointments, we may at length be compelled to betake ourselves to him alone. Why elfe do we experience fo many changes and crosses; why are we so often in heaviness? We know that he delights in the pleasure and prosperity of his servants, that he does not willingly afflict or grieve his children, but there is a necessity on our parts, in order to teach us that we have no stability in ourselves, and that no creature can do us good but by his appointment. While the people of Israel depended upon him for food, they gathered up the manna every morning in the field; but when they would hoard it up in their houses, that they might have a stock within themfelves, they had it without his bleffing, and it proved good for nothing; it foon bred worms and grew offensive. We may often observe something like this occurs both in our temporal and spiritual concerns. The Lord gives us a dear friend to our comfort, but ere long we forget that the friend is only the channel of conveyance, and that all the comfort

comfort is from himself. To remind us of this the ftream is dried up, the friend torn away by death or removed far from us, or perhaps the friendship ceases, and a coolness insensibly takes place, we know not how or why: the true reason is, that when we rejoiced amiss in our gourd, the Lord for our good fent a worm to the root of it. Inflances of this kind are innumerable, and the great inference from them all, Cease from man, cease from creatures, for wherein are they to be accounted of; my foul wait thou only, only upon the Lord, who is (according to the expressive phrase, Heb. iv. 13.) he with whom we have to do for foul and body, for time and eternity. What thanks do we owe, that though we have not yet attained perfectly this great lesson, yet we are admitted into that school where alone it can be learnt; and though we are poor, flow scholars, the great and effectual teacher to whom we have been encouraged and enabled to apply, can and will bring us forward. He communicates not only instructions, but capacities and powers. There is none like him; he can make the blind to fee, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak: and how great is his condescension and patience! how does he accommodate himself to our weakness, and teach us as we are able to bear! Though all are very dunces when he first receives them, not one was ever turned out as incapable, for he makes them what he would have them to be. O that we may fet him always before us, and confider every difpensation, person, thing, we meet in the course of every day as messengers from him, each N 5 bringing bringing us some line of instruction for us to copy into that day's experience. Whatever passes within us or around us may be improved (when he teaches us how) as a perpetual commentary upon his good word. If we converse and observe with this view we may learn something every moment, wherever the path of duty leads us, in the streets as well as in the closet, and from the conversation of those who know not God (when we cannot avoid being present at it) as well as from those who do.

Separation of dear friends is, as you observed, hard to flesh and blood; but grace can make it tolerable. I have an abiding persuasion that the Lord can easily give more than ever he will take away. Which part of the alternative must be my lot, or when, he only knows; but in general I can rely on him to appoint the time, the manner, and I trust his promise of strength suited to the day shall be made good. Therefore I can for the most part rejoice, that all things are in the hand and under the direction of him who knows our frame, and has himself borne our griefs and carried our forrows in his own body. A time of weeping must come, but the morning of joy will make amends for all. Who can expound the meaning of that one expression, An exceeding and eternal weight of glory? The case of unconverted friends is still more burdenfome to think of, but we have encouragement and warrant to pray and to hope. He who called us can eafily call others; and he feldom lays a defire of this fort very closely and warmly upon the hearts of his people, but when it is his gracious defign fooner n

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fooner or later to give an answer of peace. However, it becomes us to be thankful for ourselves, and to bow our anxieties and reasonings before his sovereign will, who doth as he pleases with his own.

Methinks winter is your summer. You have been like the bee, collecting from many flowers; I hope you will carry good store of honey home with you. May you find the Lord there, and he can easily supply the failure of means and creatures. We cannot be in any place to so much advantage as where the call of duty leads. What we cannot avoid may we chearfully submit to, and not indulge a vain thought that we could chuse a better situation for ourselves (all things considered) than he has chosen for us.

When we have opportunity of enjoying many ordinances, it is a mercy to be able to prize and improve them; but when he cuts us short for a scason, if we wait upon him we shall do well without them. Secret prayer and the good word are the chief wells from whence we draw the water of salvation. These will keep the soul alive when creature streams are cut off; but the richest variety of public means, and the closest attendance upon them, will leave us lean and pining in the midst of plenty, if we are remiss and formal in the other two. I think David never appears in a more lively frame of mind than when he wrote the 42d, 63d, and 84th Psalms, which were all penned in a dry land and at a distance from the public ordinances.

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1772.

T Had been wishing to hear from you that I might know where to write. I hope I can affure you of a friendly fympathy with you in your trials. I can in some measure guess at what you feel from what I have feen and felt myfelf, in cafes where I have been nearly concerned. But my compassion, though fincere, is ineffectual: if I can pity, I cannot relieve. All I can do is, as the Lord enables me, to remember you both before him. But there is one whose compassion is infinite. The love and tenderness of ten thousand earthly friends, of ten thousand mothers towards their sucklings, if compared with his, are less than a drop of water to the ocean: and his power is infinite too. Why then do our sufferings continue, when he is so compassionate and could remove them with a word? Surely if we cannot give the particular reasons (which yet he will acquaint us with hereafter, John xiii. 7.) the general reason is at hand; he afflicts not for his own pleasure, but for our profit; to make us partakers of his holine's, and because he loves us.

Judge not the Lord by feeble fense,
But trust him for his grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

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I wish you much comfort from David's thought. Pf. 142-3. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me thou knowest my path. The Lord is not withdrawn to a great distance, but his eye is upon you, and he fees you not with the indifference of a mere spectator, but he observes with attention, he knows, he considers your path: yea, he appoints it, and every circumstance about it is under his direction. Your trouble began at the hour he faw best; it could not come before, and he has marked the degree of it to a hair's breadth, and the duration to a minute. He knows likewise how your spirit is affected, and such supplies of grace and strength, and in such seasons as he sees needful, he will afford. So that when things appear darkest you shall still be able to fay, Though chastened, not killed. Therefore hope in God, for you shall vet praise him.

I shall pray that the Bath waters may be beneficial; and that the waters of the sanctuary there may be healing and enlivening to you all. Our all-sufficient God can give seasons of resreshment in the darkest hours, and break through the thickest clouds of outward (affliction) or distress. To you it is given, not only to believe in Jesus, but to suffer for his sake: for so we do, not only when we are called to follow him to imprisonment or death, but when he enables us to bear afflictive dispensations with due submission and patience. Then he is glorisied: then his grace and power are manifested in us. The world, so far as they know our case, have a proof before them that our religion is not

merely notional, but that there is a power and reality in it. And the Lord's people are encouraged by what they see of his faithfulness to ourselves. And there are more eyes upon us still. We are a spectacle to the universe, to angels as well as to men. Chear up: the Lord has put you in your present trying situation, that you may have the fairer opportunity of adorning your profession of the Gospel; and though you suffer much, he is able to make you abundant amends. Nor need I remind you that he has suffered unspeakably more for you; he drank for your sake a cup of unmixed wrath, and only puts into your hand a cup of affliction

mixed with many mercies.

The account you gave of the poor man detained in the inn was very affecting. Such fcenes are or should be instructive, to teach us resignation under the trials we must meet with every day. only are we vifited less than our iniquities have deferved, but much less than many of our fellowcreatures daily meet with. We need not look about far or long to find others in a worse situation than ourselves. If a fit of the gout or cholic is so grievous and fo hard to bear, what do we owe to him who delivered us from that place of unutterable torment, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever, without hope or respite? and if we cannot help interesting ourselves in the groans of a stranger, how ought the groans of Jesus to be as it were continually founding in our ears? What are all other fufferings compared to his? And yet he endured them freely. He needed not to have borne them, if he would have left us to perish; but such was his love, he died that we might live, and endured the fiercest agonies that he might open to us the gate of everlatting peace and happiness. How amazingly perverse is my heart, that I can be more affected with a melancholy flory in a news-paper concerning persons I never faw, than with all that I read of his bitter passion in the garden and on the crofs, though I profess to believe he endured it all for me. O! if we could always behold him by faith as evidently crucified before our eyes, how would it compose our spirits as to all the sweets and bitters of this poor life! What a banner would it prove against all the snares and temptations whereby Satan would draw us into evil: and what a firm ground of confidence would it afford us amidst the conflicts we sustain from the working of unbelief and indwelling fin! I long for more of that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not feen, that I may be preserved humble, thankful, watchful and dependant. To behold the glory and the love of Jesus is the only effectual way to participate of his image. Amouboll mo of the

We are to set out to-night from the Interpreter's house towards the hill difficulty, and hope to be favored with a fight of the cross by the way. To stand at the foot of it, with a softened heart and melting eyes; to forget our fins, sorrows and burdens, while we are wholly swallowed up in the contemplation of him who bore our fins in his own body upon the tree, is certainly the most desirable situation

fituation on this fide the grave. To speak of it and to see it by the light of the Spirit are widely different things: and though we cannot always enjoy this view, yet the remembrance of what we have seen is an excellent means of encouragement to mount the hill and to face the lions.

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I believe L shall hardly find leifure to fill my paper this time. It is now Saturday evening, and growing late. I am just returned from a serious walk, which is my usual manner of closing the week when the weather is fine. I endeavour to join in heart with the Lord's ministers and people, who are feeking a bleffing on to-morrow's ordinan. ces. At fuch times I especially remember those friends with whom I have gone to the house of the Lord in company, confequently you are not forgot. I can venture to assure you, that if you have a value for our prayers, you have a frequent share in them; yea, are loved and remembered by many here; but as we are forgetful creatures, I hope you will always refresh our memory; and quicken out prayers by a yearly visit. In the morning I shall think of you again. What a multitude of eyes and hearts will be directed to our Redeemer to-morrow! He has a numerous and necessitous family, but he is rich enough to supply them all, and his tender compassions extend to the meanest and most unworthy. Like the fun, he can chear and enlighten thousands and millions at once, and give to each as bountifully as if there were no more to partake of his favor. His best bleffings are not diminished by being shared among many. The greatest greatest earthly monarch would soon be poor if he was to give a little (though but a little) to all his fubjects; but Jesus has unsearchable, inexhaustible riches of grace to bestow. The innumerable assembly before the throne have been all supplied from his fulness, and yet there is enough and to spare for us also, and for all that shall come after us. May he give us an eager appetite, an hunger and thirst that will not be put off with any thing short of the bread of life; and then we may confidently open our mouths wide, for he has promifed to fill them.

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LETTER VII.

1773.

OINCE I wrote last the Lord has been gracious to us here. He crowned the last year with his goodness, and renews his benefits to us every day. He has been pleased to bless the preaching of his Gospel amongst us, both to consolation and conviction; and several are I hope earnestly seeking him, who were lately dead in trespasses and fins. Dear Mr. — was released from all his complaints the 25th of November. A few days before his death he was enabled to speak more intelligibly than usual for about a quarter of an hour, and expressed a comfortable hope, which was a great fatisfaction to us; for though we had not the leaft doubt of his being built upon the rock, it was to us an answer to prayer that he could again speak the language of faith; and much prayer had been made on this account, especially that very evening. After that night he spoke little, and hardly took any notice, but continued chiefly drowfy till he died. I preached his funeral fermon from Lam. iii. 31,32, 33. Mrs. L-'s complaint grows worfe and worse; she suffers much in her body, and has much more perhaps to suffer, but her consolations in the Lord abound. He enables her to maintain faith, patience and submission, in an exemplary manner, and shews us, in his dealings with her, that he is all-sufficient and faithful to those who

who put their trust in him. I am glad to hear that you had comfortable seasons while at Bath. It is indeed a great mercy that God's ordinances' are established in that place of dissipation; and I hope many, who go there with no higher view than to drink the Bath waters, will be brought to draw with joy the waters of life from those wells of falvation. He does nothing in vain, and when he affords the means, we may confidently hope he will bestow the bleffing. The distipation of spirit you complain of, when you are in a strange place, is I suppose felt by most, if not by all, who can be satisfied in no place without some token of the Lord's presence. I consider it rather as an infirmity than a fin, ftrictly speaking; though all our infirmities are finful, being the effects of a depraved nature. In our present circumstances new things excite new ideas, and when our usual course of life is broken in upon, it disjoints and unsettles our thoughts. It is a proof of our weakness: it may and ought to be lamented; but I believe we shall not get the better of it, till we leave the mortal body to moulder into dust. Perhaps few suffer more inconvenience from this article than myfelf, which is one reason why I love home, and seldom leave it without some reluctance; and it is one reason why we should love heaven, and long for the hour when, at liberty from all incumbrance, we shall see the Lord without a vail, and serve him without distraction. The Lord by his Providence feconds and confirms the declarations of his word and ministry. Much we read and much we hear concerning

concerning the emptiness, vanity and uncertainty of the prefent state. When our minds are en. lightened by his Holy Spirit, we receive and acknowledge what his word declares to be truth; yet if we remain long without changes, and our path is very fmooth, we are for the most part but faintly affected with what we profess to believe, But when fome of our dearest friends are taken from us. the lives of others threatened, and we ourselves are brought low with pain and fickness, then we not only fay but feel that this must not, cannot be our rest. You have had several exercises of this kind. of late in your family, and I trust you will be able to fet your feal to that gracious word, That though afflictions in themselves are not joyous, but grievous, yet in due feafon they yield the peaceful fruits of righteousness. Various and blessed are the fruits they produce. By affliction prayer is quickened, for our prayers are very apt to grow languid and formal in a time of ease. Affliction greatly helps us to understand the scriptures, especially the promiles, most of which being made to times of trouble, we cannot so well know their fulness, sweetness and certainty, as when we have been in the fituation to which they are fuited, have been enabled to trust and plead them, and found them fulfilled in our own case. We are usually indebted to affliction as the means or occasion of the most fignal discoveries we are favored with of the wifdom, power, and faithfulness of the Lord. These are best observed by the evident proofs we have that he is near to support us under trouble, and that he can

can and does deliver us out of it. Ifrael would not have feen fo much of the Lord's arm outfretched in their behalf, had not Pharaoh oppressed, oppoled and purfued them. Afflictions are defigned likewise for the manifestation of our fincerity to ourselves and to others. When faith endures the fire we know it to be of the right kind; and others. who fee we are brought fafe out, and lofe nothing but the drofs, will confess that God is with us of a truth, Dan. iii. 27, 28. Surely this thought fhould reconcile us to fuffer, not only with patience but with chearfulness, if God may be glorified in us. This made the Apostle rejoice in tribulation, that the power of Christ might be noticed, as resting upon him and working mightily in him. Many of our graces likewife cannot thrive or shew themfelves to advantage without trials, fuch as refignation, patience, meekness, long-suffering. I obferve some of the London Porters do not appear to be very firong men, yet they will trudge along under a burden which some stouter people could not carry fo well: the reason is that they are accustomed to carry burdens, and by continual exercife their shoulders acquire a strength suited to their work. It is so in the Christian life; activity and strength of grace is not ordinarily acquired by those who fit still and live at ease, but by those who frequently meet with fomething which requires a full exertion of what power the Lord has given them. So again, it is by our own fufferings we learn to pity and sympathise with others in their sufferings: fuch a compassionate disposition, which excites our feelings

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feelings for the afflicted, is an eminent branch of the mind which was in Christ. But these feelings would be very faint, if we did not in our own experience know what forrows and temptations mean. Afflictions do us good likewife, as they make us more acquainted with what is in our own hearts, and thereby promote humiliation and felfabasement. There are abominations which, like nests of vipers, lie so quietly within, that we hardly fuspect they are there till the rod of affliction rouses them; then they his and shew their venom. This discovery is indeed very distressing; yet, till it is made, we are prone to think ourselves much less vile than we really are, and cannot fo heartily abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes.

But I must write a sermon rather than a letter. if I would enumerate all the good fruits which by the power of fanctifying grace are produced from this bitter tree. May we under our several trials find them all revealed in ourselves, that we may not complain of having fuffered in vain. While we have fuch a depraved nature, and live in fuch a polluted world; while the roots of pride, vanity, felf-dependence, felf-feeking, are fo ftrong within us, we need a variety of sharp difpensations to keep us from forgetting ourselves, and from cleaving to the duft.

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LETTER VIII.

1774.

HE very painful illness which Mrs. fo long endured had doubtless not only prepared you to expect the news of her dismission, but made you more willing to refign her. You are bereaved of a valuable friend: but life in her circumflances was burthensome; and who can be forry to confider her now as freed from all fuffering, and posselfed of all happiness. But besides this, I trust the Lord has favoured you with an habitual fense of the wisdom and propriety of all his appointments; fo that when his will is manifested by the event you are enabled to fay, " All is well." " I was dumb " and opened not my mouth, because thou didst " it." She is gone a little before you; and after a few more changes you will meet her again to unspeakable advantage, and rejoice together before the throne for ever. There every tear will be wiped away, and you shall weep no more. The Lord could have prevented the cause of her great sufferings, but I doubt not he afflicted her in wisdom and mercy: he could easily have restored her to health, but the time was haftening when he purposed to have her with him where he is, that the might behold his glory, and have all the defires he put into her heart abundantly satisfied. Precious in his fight is the death of his faints, and every circumstance cumstance under the direction of infinite wisdom, His sovereignty forbids us to say, Why hast thou done this? And his love assures that he does all things well. I have lost a friend likewise: I believe I may say sew persons, not immediately related to her, could value her more highly than myself; and though of late years I could not have the pleasure of her company, it was a constant satisfaction to me to know I had such a friend.

Mr. T——'s fickness and death followed immediately upon this stroke. I doubt not but you have been much affected with this dispensation likewise. But here again we have the same stronghold to retreat to. The Lord has done it. What a pleasing prospect of increasing usefulness is now interrupted! How many will mourn his loss! Yet we are sure the work which the Lord had appointed him was finished. They who loved his ministry, and were profited by it, are left apparently destitute; but Jesus, the good Shepherd, is able to take care of his own, and will sulfil his promise to them all. He has said, Verily they shall be fed.

We have had trying and dying times here: half my time almost has been taken up with visiting the sick. I have seen death in a variety of forms, and have had frequent occasion of observing how insignificant many things, which are now capable of giving us pain or pleasure, will appear, when the soul is brought near to the borders of eternity. All the concerns which relate solely to this life will then be found as trivial, as the traces of a dream

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from which we are awakened. Nothing will then comfort us but the knowledge of Jesus and his love, nothing grieve us but the remembrance of our unfaithful carriage to him, and what poor returns we made to his abundant goodness. The Lord forbid that this thought should break our peace! No, faith in his name may forbid our fear, though we shall see and confess we have been unprofitable fervants. There shall be no condemnation to them that are in him, but furely shame and humiliation will accompany us to the very threshold of heaven. and ought to do fo. I furely shall then be more affected than I am now with the coolness of my love, the faintness of my zeal, the vanity of my heart, and my undue attachment to the things of time. O these clogs, fetters, vales and mountains, which obstruct my course, darken my views. flacken my pace, and difable me in fervice! Well it is for me that I am not under the law, but under grace, not one and every, and ere lon, ora to

To-morrow is the Sabbath. I am usually glad when it returns, though it seldom finds me in that frame of mind which I would desire. But it is my happiness to live amongst many who count the hours from one ordinance to another. I know they pray that I may be a messenger of peace, and an instrument of good to their souls, and I have cause to hope their prayers are in a measure answered. For their sakes as much as my own I am glad to go up to the house of the Lord. O that in watering others I may be also watered myself! I have been praying that to-morrow may be a day of power Vol. III

with you and with us, and with all that love Jesus in fincerity; that we may fee his glory, and tafte his love in the fanctuary. When it is thus, the Sabbath is a bleffed day indeed, an earnest of hea-There they keep an everlasting Sabbath. and cease not night or day admiring the riches of redeeming love, and adoring him who washed his people from their fins in his own blood. To have fuch imperfect communion with them as is in this state attainable in this pleasing exercise, is what alone can make life worth the name. For this I figh and long, and cry to the Lord to rend the vail of unbelief, scatter the clouds of ignorance, and break down the walls which fin is daily building up to hide him from my eyes. I hope I can fay, my foul is athirst for God, and nothing less than the light of his countenance can fatisfy me. Bleffed be his name for the defire: it is his own gift, and he never gives it in vain. He will afford us a tafte of the water of life by the way, and ere long we shall drink abundantly at the fountain head, and have done with complaint for ever. May we be thankful for what we receive, and still earnestly defirous of more.

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HE Lord brought us home in peace. My visit to was agreeable, and I shall often think of it with pleasure; though the deadness and drynefs of my own spirit, a good part of the time I was there, | proved a confiderable abatement. I am eager enough to converse with the Lord's people, when at the same time I am backward and indisposed to communion with the Lord himself. The two evils charged upon Israel of old, a proneness to forfake the fountain of living waters, and to trust to broken cisterns (which can do me no good unless the fupplies them) run through the whole of my experience abroad and at home. A few drops of grace in my fellow-worms endear them 03

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to me exceedingly. If I expect to fee any Christian friends, I count the hours till we meet; I promise myself great benefit; but if the Lord withdraws his influence, the best of them prove to me but clouds without water. It was not however wholly fo with me all the time I staid with my friends; but I fuffer much in learning to depend upon the Lord alone: I have been at this leffon many a long year, but am so poor and dull a scholar, that I have not yet made any tolerable progress in it. I think I received fome instruction and advantage where I little expected it, I mean at Mr. Cox's Museum. The efforts of his ingenuity amazed me, while at the same time I was struck with their infignificance. His fine things were curious beyond all I had any idea of, and yet what are they better than toys and amusements, suited to the taste of children! And notwithstanding the variety of their motions, they were all destitute of life. There is unspeakably more wisdom and contrivance in the mechanism of a butterfly or a bee, that flies unnoticed in the fields, than in all his apparatus put together. But the works of God are difregarded, while the feeble imitations of them which men can produce gain universal applause. 1941 18 890 W

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If you and I could make felf-moving dragons and elephants, what would it profit us? Bleffed be God! that he has given us some glimpses of his wisdom and love; by which our hearts, more hard and lifeless by nature than the stones in the street, are constrained and enabled to move upwards, and to seek after the Lord. He has given us in his word

word a greater treasure than all that we ever beheld with our eyes, and a hope which shall flourish when the earth and all its works shall be burnt up. What will all the fine things of men's device be worth in that day?

I think the passage you refer to in Mr. juftly exceptionable. His intention is good, and the miftake he would censure very dangerous; but he might have explained himself more clearly. I apprehend he and you do not mean the same thing by being in the dark. It is not an uncomfortable. but a careless frame which he would censure. They who walk in darkness and see no light, and yet are exhorted to flay themselves upon God, Isa. I. 10. are faid to hearken to the voice of his fervant. Though they cannot fee the Lord, they are feeking and mourning after him, and waiting in the use of means, and warring against sin. Mr. had another fet of people in view, who trust in the notions of Gospel truth, or some past convictions and comforts; and though at present they give no evidence of spiritual desires, but are worldly in their spirit and conversation; talk of trusting in the Lord; account it a weakness to doubt of their ftate, and think all is well because they profess to believe the doctrines of grace. In a word, it is the darkness of fin and sloth, not the occasional darkness of an exercised soul, against which his observation is pointed. Or if indeed he meant more than this, we are not obliged to believe him. Remember your privilege; you have the Bible in your hands, and are not bound to follow books or preachers

preachers any farther than what they deliver agrees with the oracles of truth. We have great reason to be thankful for the instructions and writings of spiritual men, but they are all fallible even as ourselves. One is our master, even Christ: what he fays we are to receive implicitly; but we do not owe implicit subjection to the best of our fellow creatures. The Bereans were commended that they would not take even the Apostle Paul upon trust, but fearched the scriptures to see whether these things were fo. May the Lord give us a spirit of humility and discernment in all things.

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LETTER II.

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TETHINKS it is high time to ask you how IVI you do, to thank you for your last letter, and to let you know, that though necessity makes me flack in writing, yet I can and do often think of you. My filence has been fometimes owing to want of leifure; and fometimes, when I could have found leifure, my harp has been out of tune, and I had no heart to write. Perhaps you are ready to infer, by my fitting down to write at last, that my harp is now well tuned, and I have fomething extraordinary to offer: beware of thinking fo, left you should be fadly disappointed. Should I make myself the subject, I could give you at prefent but a mournful ditty. I suppose you have heard I have been ill; through mercy I am now well. But indeed I must farther tell you, that when I was fick I was well; and fince the Lord has removed my illness I have been much worse. My illness was far from violent in itself, and was greatly sweetened by a calm, submissive frame the Lord gave me under it. My heart seemed more alive to him then, than it has done fince my cough, fever, and deafness have been removed. Shall I give you another bit of a ridd e, that notwithstanding the many changes I pass through I am always the fame. This is the very truth: in me, that is,

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in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; so that if fometimes my spirit is in a measure humble, lively and dependent, it is not I am grown better than I was, but the Lord is pleased to put forth his gracious power in my weakness: and when my heart is dry and stupid, when I can find no pleasure in waiting upon God, it is not because I am worse than I was before, but only the Lord fees it best that I should feel as well as fay what a poor creature I am. My heart was once like a dungeon, out of the reach of day and always dark: the Lord by his grace has been pleafed to make this dungeon a room, by putting windows in it; but I need not tell you, that though windows will transmit the daylight into a room, they cannot supply the want of it. When the day is gone, windows are of little use; when the day returns the room is enlightened by them again. Thus, unless the Lord shines, I cannot retain to-day the light I had yesterday; and though his presence makes a delightful difference, I have no more to boast of in myself at one time than another; yet when it is dark, I am warranted to expect the return of light again. When he is with me all goes on pleafantly; when he withdraws I find I can do nothing without him. I need not wonder that I find it fo, for it must be so of course, if I am what I confess myself to be, a poor, helpless, finful creature in myself. Nor need I be over much discouraged, fince the Lord has promifed to help those who can do nothing without him, not those who can make a tolerable shift to help themselves. Through mercy he does not fo fo totally withdraw, as to leave me without any power or will to cry for his return. I hope he maintains in me at all times a defire of his presence, yet it becomes me to wait for him with patience, and to live upon his faithfulness, when I can feel nothing but evil in myself.

In your letter, after having complained of your inability, you fay you converse with many who find it otherwise, who can go whenever they will to the Father of mercies with a child-like confidence, and never return without an answer, an answer of peace. If they only mean that they are favored with an established faith, and can see that the Lord is always the fame, and that their right to the bleffings of the covenant is not at all affected by their unworthiness, I wish you and I had more experience of the same privilege. In general the Lord helps me to aim at it, though I find it sometimes difficult to hold fast my confidence; but if they fpeak absolutely with respect to their frames, that they not only have something to support them under their changes, but meet with no changes that require fuch support, I must say it is well that they do not live here; if they did, they would not know how to pity us, and we should not know how to understand them. We have an enemy at that fights against our peace, and I know not one amongst us but often groans under the warfare. I advise you not to be troubled by what you hear of other folks experience, but keep close to the written word, where you will meet with much to encourage you, though you often feel yourself weary

and heavy laden. For my own part, I like that path best which is well beaten by the footsteps of the flock, though it is not always pleasant and strewed with flowers. In our way we find some hills, from whence we can chearfully look about us; but we meet with deep valleys likewise, and feldom travel long upon even ground.

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LETTER III.

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T Am fatisfied with your answer to my question: we are not proper judges of each other's circumstances, and I am in some measure weared from judging hastily, that what would not be convenient for me must therefore necessarily be wrong for another. However, my folicitude for your welfare made me venture to drop a hint, as I was perfuaded you would take it in good part. Indeed all fituations and circumstances (supposing them not finful in themselves, and that we are lawfully placed in them) are nearly alike. In London I am in a crowd, in the Country I am fure there is a crowd in me. To what purpose do I boast of retirement, when I am peftered by a legion in every place? How often, when I am what I call alone, may my mind be compared to a puppet-shew, a fair, a Newgate, or any of those scenes where folly, noise and wickedness most abound? On the contrary, fometimes I have enjoyed sweet recollection and composure where I could have hardly expected it. But still, though the power be all of the Lord, and we of ourselves can do nothing, it is both our duty and our wisdom to be attentive to the use of appointed means on the one hand, and on the other watchful against those things which we find by experience have a tendency to damp our fervor or to diffipate our spirits. A comfortable intimacy with a fellow worm cannot be maintained without a certain

a certain delicacy and circumspection, a studiousness in improving opportunities of pleasing, and in avoiding what is known to be offensive. For though love will make large allowances for involuntary mistakes, it cannot easily brook a slight. We act thus as it were by inftinct towards those whom we dearly love, and to whom we feel ourfelves greatly obliged: and happy are they who are most influenced by this sentiment in their walk before the Lord. But alas! here we are chargeable with fuch inconfiftencies as we should be greatly ashamed of in common life. And well it is for us that the Lord's thoughts and ways are above ours. and that he is infinite in mercy as well as in power; for furely our dearest friends would have been weary of us, and have renounced us long ago, had we behaved to them as we have too often done to him. He is God and not man, and therefore he still waits to be gracious, though we have so often trifled with him. Surely we may well fay with the Prophet, Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity! His tenderness and forbearance towards his own people (whose fins being committed against love and light and experience are more aggravated than others) is aftonishing indeed. But, oh! may the times past suffice to have grieved his Spirit, and may we be enabled from henceforth to ferve him with a fingle eye and a fimple heart, to be faithful to every intimation of his will, and to make him Order of the spiritual for the first our All in all!

Mr. — has been here, and I have been with him at — fince his return. We feem glad

glad to be together when we can. When I am with him I feel quite at home and at ease, and can tell him (so far as I dare tell a creature) all that is in my heart. A plain proof that union of spirit depends no more upon an exact uniformity of fentiment than on a uniformity of prayers: for in some points of doctrine we differ considerably; but I trust I agree with him in the views I have of the excellency, fuitableness, and sufficiency of the Savior, and of his right to reign without a rival in the hearts of his redeemed people. An experimental knowledge of Jesus, as the deliverer from fin and wrath, and the author of eternal life and falvation to all who are enabled to believe, is a fufficient ground for union of heart: in this point all who are taught of God are of one mind. But an eager fighting for or against those points which are usually made the subjects of controversy tends to nourish pride and evil tempers in ourselves, and to alienate our hearts from those we hope to spend an eternity with. In heaven we shall neither be Diffenters, Moravians, nor Methodifts; neither Calvinifts nor Arminians; but followers of the Lamb, and children of the kingdom. There we shall hear the voice of war no more.

We are still favored with health and many temporal bleffings. My spiritual walk is not so smooth as my outward path; in public I am mercifully supported, in secret I most fensibly feel my own vileness and weakness; but through all the Lord is gracious.

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LETTER IV.

HERE is hardly any thing in which the Lord permits me to meet with more difappointment than in the advantage I am ready to promise myself from creature converse. When I expect to meet any of my Christian friends, my thoughts usually travel much faster than my body; I anticipate the hour of meeting, and my imagination is warmed with expectation of what I shall fav and what I shall hear: and sometimes I have had seafons for which I ought to be more thankful than I am. It is pleasant indeed when the Lord favors us with a happy hour, and is pleased to cause our hearts to burn within us while we are speaking of his goodness. But often it is far otherwise with me : Learry with me a diffipation of spirit, and find that I can neither impart or receive. Something from within or from without croffes my schemes, and when I retire I feem to have gained nothing but a fresh conviction, that we can neither help or be helped unless the Lord himself is pleased to help With his presence in our hearts we might be comfortable and happy, if thut up in one of the cells of Newgate: without it, the most select company, the most defirable opportunities, prove but clouds without water:

I have fometimes thought of asking you, whether you find that difference between being abroad and at home that I do? But I take it for granted

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that you do not; your connections and intimacies are I believe chiefly with those who are highly favored of the Lord, and if you can break through or be upon your guard against the inconveniencies which attend frequent changes and much company, you must be very happy in them. But I believe, confidering my weakness, the Lord has chosen wifely and well for me, in placing me in a state of retirement, and not putting it in my power, were it ever so much my inclination, to be often abroad. As I stir so seldom, I believe when I do it is not upon the whole to my difadvantage; for I meet with more or less upon which my reflections afterwards may by his bleffing be useful to me, though at the time, my visits most frequently convince me how little wisdom or skill I have in improving time and opportunities. But were I to live in London I know not what might be the confequence. Indeed I need not puzzle myself about it, as my call does not lie there; but I pity and pray for those who do live there; and I admire such of them as, in those circumstances which appear so formidable to me, are enabled to walk fimply, humbly, and closely with the Lord. They remind me of Daniel, unhurt in the midst of lions, or of the bush which Mofes faw, furrounded with flames, yet not confumed, because the Lord was there. Some such I do know, and I hope you are one of the number.

This is certain, that if the light of God's countenance and communion with him in love, afford the greatest happiness we are capable of, then whatever tends to indispose us for this pursuit, or to draw a vail

vail between him and our fouls, must be our great lofs. If we walk with him, it must be in the path of duty, which lies plain before us when our eye is fingle, and we are waiting with attention upon his word, Spirit and providence. Now wherever the path of duty leads we are fafe; and it often does lead and place us in fuch circumstances as no other confideration would make us chuse. We were not defigned to be mere recluses, but have all a part to act in life. Now if I find myfelf in the midft of things difagreeable enough in themselves to the spiritual life; yet if, when the question occurs, What doft thou here? my heart can answer, I am here by the will of God, I believe it to be, all things confidered, my duty to be here at this time rather than elfewhere. If I fay I am tolerably fatiffied of this, then I would not burden and grieve myfelf about what I cannot avoid or alter, but endeavour to take all fuch things up with chearfulness, as a part of my daily cross; fince I am called, not only to do the will of God, but to fuffer it: but if I am doing my own will rather than his, then I have reason to fear, lest I should meet with either a fnare or a sting at every step. May the Lord Jesus be with you! six hard seron to line

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LETTER V.

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DEAR MADAM,

I Am rather of the latest to present my congratulation to you and Mr. — on your marriage, but I have not been unmindful of you. My heart has repeatedly wished you all that my pen can express, that the new relation in which the Providence of God has placed you may be blessed to you in every respect, may afford you much temporal comfort, promote your spiritual progress, and enlarge your sphere of usefulness in the world and in the church.

By this time I suppose visits and ceremonies are pretty well over, and you are beginning to be fettled in your new fituation. What an important period is a wedding-day! What an entire change of circumstances does it produce! What an influence it has upon every day of future life! How many cares, inquietudes and trials, does it expose us to, which we might otherwise have avoided! But they who love the Lord, and are guided by his word and Providence, have nothing to fear. For in every state, relation and circumstance in life, he will be with them, and will furely do them good. His grace, which is needful in a fingle, is sufficient for a married life. I fincerely wish Mr. — and you much happiness together; that you may be mutually helpmeets, and affift each other in walk-

ing as fellow heirs of the hope of eternal life. Your cares and trials I know must be increased: may your comforts be increased proportionally! They will be fo, if you are enabled heartily and fimply to intreat the Lord to keep your heart fixed near to himself. All the temporal bleffings and accommodations he provides to fweeten life, and make our passage through this wilderness more agreeable, will fail and disappoint us, and produce us more thorns than roles, unless we can keep fight of his hand in bestowing them, and hold and use the gifts in some due subserviency to what we owe to the Giver. But alas! we are poor creatures. prone to wander, prone to admire our gourds, cleave to our cifterns, and think of building tabernacles, and taking our rest in this polluted world, Hence the Lord often fees it necessary, in mercy to his children, to embitter their sweets, to break their cifterns, fend a worm to their gourds, and draw a dark cloud over their pleasing prospects. His word tells us, that all here is vanity, compared with the light of his countenance, and if we cannot or will not believe it upon the authority of his. word, we must learn it by experience. May he enable you to fettle it in your hearts, that creature comforts are precarious, insufficient and ensnaring; that all good comes from his hand, and that nothing can do us good, but so far as he is pleased. to make it the instrument of communicating, as a stream, that goodness which is in him as a Even the bread which we eat without the influence of his promise and bleffing, would

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makes every thing good, gives a tenfold value to our comforts, and greatly diminishes the weight of every cross.

The ring upon your finger is of some value as gold, but this is not much; what makes it chiefly valuable to you is, that you consider it as a pledge and token of the relation you bear to him who gave it you. I know no fitter emblem of the light in which we should consider all those good things which the Lord gives us richly to enjoy. When every thing we receive from him is received and prized as a fruit and pledge of his covenant love, then his bounties, instead of being set up as rivals, and idols to draw our hearts from him, awaken us to fresh exercises of gratitude, and furnish us with fresh motives of chearful obedience every hour.

Time is short, and we live in a dark and cloudy day, when iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, and we have reason to fear the Lord's hand is lifted up in displeasure at our provocations. May he help us to fet loofe to all below, and to be found watching unto prayer for grace to keep our garments undefiled, and to be faithful witneffes for him in our places! O! it is my defire for myfelf and for all my dear friends, that whilft too many feem content with a half profession, a name to live, an outward attachment to ordinances and fentiments and parties, we may be ambitious to experience what the glorious Gospel is capable of effecting, both as to fanctification and confolation, in this state of infirmity; that we may have our loins girded

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girded up, our lamps burning, and by our fimpliative and spirituality constrain those who know us to acknowledge that we have been with Jesus, have sat at his feet, and drank of his Spirit.

April 13, 1776. I am, Madam, Your affectionate friend and servant,

brieg of word at rest some house or eds a race this it in all throw no bear employ of the light in which we found confine at their good thines which the coord given in memor to enlark. When the beviewed middless to accompany a received and presides a fruit and hadge of his covenant love. that his seaming the lead to being for up as rivale. ind dole to drew of harms from him. have been the to talk exercises of gratical and famility as with nd resting of recorded chedicace every none. I appearance of the state of the one, when surspend abounds, the love of and w victor cold, and mu have reason to fear the Lord had is littled up to di chertare at our erovocation. My handle unto the look wall below, and to be broad article of the content of the when the undertake and copy falcated where ites for Taken of the year of a long land at a venu ber Mis v deit abutiff was year He red bac Ever convent with a ball profession, a name to live an oniverd whichmen to etchnoods and leng-R'TTER', we may be empireous to expedistance in the boy Deckins guilled All and the Country of the Country of the day of the the fire of this may; that we say have our toins

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ONG and often I have thought of writing to you: now the time is come. May the Lord help me to fend a word in feafon! I know not how it may be with you, but be does, and to him I look to direct my thoughts accordingly. I suppose you are still in the school of the cross, learning the happy art of extracting real good out of feeming evil, and to grow tall by stooping. The flesh is a fad untoward dunce in this school, but grace makes the spirit willing to learn by suffering; yea, it cares not what it endures fo fin may be mortified, and a conformity to the image of Jesus be increased. Surely when we see the most and the best of the Lord's children so often in heaviness. and when we confider how much he loves them, Vol. II. P and

and what he has done and prepared for them, we may take it for granted that there is a need-be for their sufferings. For it would be easy to his power, and not a thousandth part of what his love intends to do for them, should he make their whole life here, from the hour of their conversion to their death, a continued course of satisfaction and comfort, without any thing to diffress them from within or without. But were it so, should we not miss many advantages? In the first place, we should not then be very comformable to our head, nor be able to fay, As he was, fo are we in this world. Methinks a believer would be ashamed to be so utterly unlike his Lord. What! The master always a man of forrow and acquainted with grief, and the fervant always happy and full of comfort! Jefus despised, reproached, neglected, opposed and betrayed, and his people admired and careffed: be living in the want of all things, and they filled with abundance: he sweating blood for anguish, and they strangers to distress: how unsuitable would these things be! How much better to be called to the honor of filling up the measure of his sufferings! A cup was put into his hand on our account, and his love engaged him to drink it for us. wrath which it contained he drank wholly himfelf, but he left us a little affliction to tafte, that we might pledge him, and remember how he loved us, and how much more he endured for us than he will ever call us to endure for him. Again, how could we without fufferings manifest the nature and truth of Gospel grace? What place should we then have

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have for patience, submission, meekness, forbearance, and a readiness to forgive, if we had nothing to try us either from the hand of the Lord or from the hand of men. A Christian without trials would be like a mill without wind or water; the contrivance and defign of the wheel-work within fide would be unnoticed and unknown, without fomething to put it in motion from without. Nor would our graces grow, unless they were called out to exercise: the difficulties we meet with not only prove, but strengthen the graces of the Spirit. If a person was always to fit still, without making use of legs or arms, he would probably wholly lofe the power of moving his limbs at last; but by walking and working he becomes strong and active. So in a long course of ease the powers of the new-man would certainly languish; the foul would grow foft, indolent, cowardly and faint; and therefore the Lord appoints his children fuch dispensations as make them strive and struggle and pant; they must press through a croud, swim against a stream. endure hardships, run, wrestle and fight, and thus their strength grows in the using.

By these things likewise they are made more willing to leave the present world, to which we are prone to cleave too closely in our hearts when our path is very smooth. Had Israel enjoyed their former peace and prosperity in Egypt, when Moses came to invite them to Canaan, I think they would hardly have listened to him. But the Lord suffered them to be brought into great trouble and bondage, and then the news of deliverance was more wel-

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come; yet still they were but half willing, and they carried a love to the flesh-pots of Egypt with them into the wilderness. We are like them; though we fay this world is vain and finful, we are too fond of it; and though we hope for true happinels only in heaven, we are often well content to flay longer here. But the Lord fends afflictions one after an. other to quicken our defires, and to convince us that this cannot be our reft. Sometimes if you drive a bird from one branch of a tree he will hop to another a little higher, and from thence to a third; but if you continue to disturb him, he will at last take wing and sty quite away. Thus we, when forced from one creature comfort, perch upon another, and so on; but the Lord mercifully follows us with trials, and will not let us rest upon any: by degrees our defires take a nobler flight, and can be fatisfied with nothing fhort of himfelf; and we say, To depart and be with Jesus is best of all.

I trust you find the name and grace of Jesus more and more precious to you; his promises more sweet, and your hope in them more abiding; your sense of your own weakness and unworthiness daily increasing; your persuasion of his all-sufficiency to guide, support and comfort you, more confirmed. You owe your growth in these respects in a great measure to his blessing upon those afflictions, which he has prepared for you and sanctified to you. May you praise him for all that is past, and trust him for all that is to come.

I am yours.

LETTER

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HOUGH I have the pleasure of hearing of you, and fending a remembrance from time to time, I am willing by this opportunity to direct a few lines to you, as a more express testimony of

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I think your experience is generally of the fearful, doubting caft. Such fouls, however, the Lord has given particular charge to his ministers to comfort. He knows our infirmities, and what temptations mean, and as a good shepherd he expresses a peculiar care and tenderness for the weak of the flock, If. xl. 4. But how must I attempt your comfort? Surely not by strengthening a mistake to which we are all too liable, by leading you to look into your own heart for (what you will never find there) something in yourself whereon to ground your hopes, if not wholly, yet at least in part. Rather let me endeavour to lead you out of yourfelf: let me invite you to look unto Jesus. Should we look for light in our own eyes, or in the fun? Is it indwelling fin distresses you? Then I can tell you (though you know it) that Jefus died for fin and finners. I can tell you, that his blood and righteousness are of infinite value; that his arm is almighty and his compassions infinite: yea, you yourself read his promises every day, and why should you doubt their being fulfilled? If you lay you do not question their truth, or that they P 3.

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are accomplished to many, but that you can hardly believe they belong to you; I would ask, what evidence you would require? A voice or an angel from heaven you do not expect. Confider, if many of the promises are not expressly directed to those to whom they belong. When you read your name on the superscription of this letter, you made no scruple to open it: why then do you hesitate at embracing the promises of the Gospel; where you read that they are addressed to those who mourn, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who are poor in spirit, &c. and cannot but be sensible that a gracious God has begun to work these dispositions in your heart. If you fay, that though you do at times mourn, hunger, &c. you are afraid you do it not enough, or not aright; consider, that this fort of reasoning is very far from the spirit and language of the Gospel; for it is grounded on a secret supposition, that in the forgiveness of sin God has a respect to something more than the atonement and mediation of Jesus; namely, to some previous good qualifications in a finner's heart, which are to share with the blood of Christ in the honor of falvation. The enemy deceives us in this matter the more easily, because a propensity to the covenant of works is a part of our natural depravity. Depend upon it, you will never have a fuitable and fufficient sense of the evil of sin, and of your share in it, fo long as you have any fin remaining in you. We must see Jesus as he is, before our apprehenfions of any spiritual truth will be compleat. But if we know that we must perish without Christ, and

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and that he is able to fave to the uttermost, we know enough to warrant us to cast our fouls upon him, and we dishonor him by fearing that when we do so he will disappoint our hope. But if you are still perplexed about the high points of Election, &c. I would advise you to leave the disposal of others to the great Judge: and as to yourfelf, I think I need not fay much to perfuade you, that if ever you are faved at all, it must be in a way of free and absolute grace. Leave disputes to others; wait upon the Lord, and he will teach you all things, in fuch degree and time as he sees best. Perhaps you have fuffered for taking things too much upon trust from men. Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. One is your master, even Christ. Study and pray over the Bible; and you may take it as a fure rule, that whatever fentiment makes any part of the word of God unwelcome to you is justly to be suspected. Aim at a chearful spirit. The more you trust God, the better you will serve him. While you indulge unbelief and fuspicion, you weaken your own hands and difcourage others. Be thankful for what he has shewn you, and wait upon him for more: you shall find he has not said, Seek ye my face, in vain. I heartily commend you to his grace and care. ... who was culot ?

And am yours.

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LETTER III.

T length, and without farther apology for my filence, I fet down to alk you how you fare? Afflictions I hear have been your lot; and if I had not heard fo, I should have taken it for granted: for I believe the Lord loves you; and as many as he I think you can fay, afflictions loves he chastens. have been good for you, and I doubt not but you have found strength according to your day; fo that though you may have been sharply tried, you have not been overpowered. For the Lord has engaged his faithfulness for this to all his children, that he will support them in all their trials; so that the fire shall not confume them, nor the floods drown them, io bytow bill his straig

1 Cor. x. 13. Ifa. xliii. 2.

If you can fay thus much, cannot you go a little further, and add in the Apostle's words, se None of these things move me, neither count I my life et dear. I rather glory in my infirmities, that the or power of Christ may rest upon me; yea, doubtce less I count all things loss and of no regard, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ " Jefus my Lord; for when I am weak then I am " ftrong." Methinks I hear you fay, "God, " who comforteth those who are cast down, has comforted my foul, and as my troubles have se abounded, my consolations in Christ have es abounded also. He has delivered, he does deliver, and in him I trust that he will yet deliver 66 me."

words. The Lord help you then to live more and more a life of faith, to feed upon the promises, and to rejoice in the assurance that all things are yours,

and shall furely work for your good.

If I guess right at what passes in your heart, the name of Jesus is precious to you; and this is a sure token of falvation, and that of God. You could not have loved him, if he had not loved you first. He spoke to you, and said, " Seek my face," before your heart cried to him, Thy face, O'Lord, will I feek. But you complain, " Alas! I love him " fo little:" that very complaint proves that you love him a great deal: for if you loved him but a little, you would think you loved him enough. A mother loves her child a great deal, yet does not complain for not loving it more; nay, perhaps she hardly thinks it possible. But such an infinite object is Jesus, that they who love him better than parents or child, or any earthly relation or comfort, will still think they hardly love him at all; because they see such a vast disproportion between the utmost they can give him, and what in himself he deserves from them. But I can give you good advice and good news: love him as well as you can now, and ere long you shall love him better. O when you fee him as he is, then I am fure you will love him indeed! If you want to love him better now while you are here, I believe I can tell you the secret how this is to be attained: trust bim. The more you trust him, the better you will love him. If you ask farther, How shall I do to trust P 5 him?

This

him? I answer, Try bim: the more you make trial of him, the more your trust in him will be strengthened. Venture upon his promises; carry them to him, and see if he will not be as good as his word. But, alas! Satan and unbelief work the contrary way. We are unwilling to try him, and therefore unable to trust him; and what wonder then that our love is faint, for who can love at uncertainties?

If you are in some measure thankful for what you have received, and hungering and thirsting for more, you are in the frame I would wish for my-self; and I desire to praise the Lord on your behalf. Pray for us. We join in love to you.

Richard Lamyours.

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LETTERS

TO O

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THE TRACE WAS . Although Labretain a they dreamed that entry of the control of t Address that a first the made of the low principal and the Alektronico de primer de la la propieta de la como dela como de la Apartment (2004) and distriction of the contraction CHARLES OF ON WASTERS OF THE STREET there is an arion to prof here. They where you have The establish a south for which a com-3 A G T. T. Land to the Same Same And American Land Land

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August 17, 1776.

I T is indeed natural to us to wish and to plan, and it is merciful in the Lord to disappoint our plans and to cross our wishes. For we cannot be safe, much less happy, but in proportion as we are weaned from our own wills, and made simply desirous of being directed by his guidance. This truth (when we are enlightened by his word) is sufficiently samiliar to the judgments; but we seldom learn to reduce it into practice, without being trained awhile in the school of disappointment. The schemes we form look so plausible and convenient, that when they are broken we are ready to say, What a pity! We try again, and with no better success: we are grieved, and perhaps angry, and

and plan out another, and fo on: at length, in a course of time, experience and observation begin to convince us, that we are not more able than we are worthy to chuse aright for ourselves. Then the Lord's invitation to cast our cares upon him, and his promise to take care of us appear valuable; and when we have done planning, his plan in our favor gradually opens, and he does more and better for us than we could either ask or think. I can hardly recollect a fingle plan of mine, of which I have not fince seen reason to be satisfied, that had it taken place in season and circumstance just as I proposed. it would, humanly speaking, have proved my ruin; or at least it would have deprived me of the greater good the Lord had defigned for me. We judge of things by their present appearances, but the Lord fees them in their consequences: if we could do so likewise, we should be perfectly of his mind; but as we cannot, it is an unspeakable mercy that he will manage for us, whether we are pleased with his management or not; and it is spoken of as one of his heaviest judgments, when he gives any person or people up to the way of their own hearts, and to walk after their own councils.

Indeed we may admire his patience towards us. If we were blind, and reduced to defire a person to lead us, and should yet pretend to dispute with him, and direct him at every step, we should probably soon weary him, and provoke him to leave us to find the way by ourselves if we could. But our gracious Lord is long-suffering and sull of compassion; he bears with our frowardness, yet he will take

take methods both to shame and to humble us, and to bring us to a confession that he is wifer than we. The great and unexpected benefit he intends us, by all the discipline we meet with, is to tread down our wills, and bring them into subjection to his. So far as we attain to this we are out of the reach of disappointment; for when the will of God can please us we shall be pleased every day, and from morning to night; I mean with respect to his dispensations. O the happiness of such a life! I have an idea of it; I hope I am aiming at it; but furely I have not attained it. Self is active in my heart, if it does not absolutely reign there. I profess to believe that one thing is needful and fufficient, and yet my thoughts are prone to wander after a hundred more. If it be true, that the light of his countenance is better than life, why am I folicitous about any thing else? If he be all-sufficient, and gives me liberty to call him mine, why do I go a begging to creatures for help? If he be about my path and bed; if the smallest, as well as the greatest events in which I am concerned are under his immediate direction; if the very hairs of my head are numbered: then my care (any farther than a care to walk in the paths of his precepts, and to follow the openings of his Providence) must be useless and needless, yea indeed finful and heathenish, burthenfome to myself and dishonourable to my profession. Let us cast down the load we are unable to carry, and if the Lord be our shepherd, refer all and trust all to him. Let us endeavour to live to him and

for him to-day, and be glad that to-morrow, with

It is storied of Pompey, that when his friends would have diffuaded him from putting to fea in a ftorm, he answered, It is necessary for me to fail. but it is not necessary for me to live. O pompous fpeech, in Pompey's sense! He was full of the idea. of his own importance, and would rather have died than have taken a step beneath his supposed dignity. But it may be accommodated with propriety to a believer's case. It becomes us to say, It is not necessary for me to be rich, or what the world accounts wife; to be healthy, or admired by my. fellow worms; to pass through life in a state of prosperity and outward comfort :- these things may be, or they may be otherwise, as the Lord in his wildom shall appoint: but it is necessary for me to be humble and spiritual, to seek communion with God, to adorn my profession of the Gospel, and to yield fubmissively to his disposal, in whatever way, whether of service or suffering, he shall be pleased to call me, to glorify him in the world. It is not necessary for me to live long, but highly expedient that whilft I do live I should live to him. Here then I would bound my defires; and here; having his word both for my rule and my warrant, I am secured from asking amis. Let me have his presence and his Spirit, wisdom to know my calling, and opportunities and faithfulness to improve them; and as to the rest, Lord help me to say, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, and how thou wilt.

I am your affectionate friend.

LETTER

seles sterling become introduced

LETTER II.

DEAR MADAM,

WHAT a poor, uncertain, dying world is this! What a wilderness in itself! How dark, how desolate, without the light of the Gospel and the knowledge of Jesus! It does not appear so to us, in a state of nature, because we are then in a state of enchantment, the magical lantern blinding us with a splendid delusion.

Thus in the defert's dreary waste,
By magic pow'r produce in haste,
As old romances say,
Castles and groves, and music sweet,
The senses of the trav'ler cheat,
And stop him in his way.

But while he gazes with furprize,
The charm diffolves, the vision dies,
Twas but enchanted ground,
Thus, if the Lord our spirit touch,
The world, which promised us so much,
A wilderness is found.

It is a great mercy to be undeceived in times and though our gay dreams are at an end, and we awake to every thing that is difguftful and difmaying, yet we fee a highway through the wilderness, a powerful

a powerful guard, an infallible guide at hand to conduct us through; and we can discern, beyond the limits of the wilderness, a better land, where we shall be at rest and at home. What will the difficulties we met by the way then signify? The remembrance of them will only remain to heighten our sense of the love, care, and power of our Savior and leader. O how shall we then admire, adore and praise him, when he shall condescend to unfold to us the beauty, propriety, and harmony of the whole train of his dispensations towards us, and give us a clear retrospect of all the way and all the turns of our pilgrimage!

In the mean while, the best method of adorning our profession, and of enjoying peace in our souls, is fimply to trust him, and absolutely to commit ourselves and our all to his management. By casting our burdens upon him our spirits become light and chearful; we are freed from a thousand anxieties and inquietudes, which are wearisome, to our minds, and which with respect to events are needless for us, yea ufeles. But though it may be easy to speak of this trust, and it appears to our judgment perfectly right and reasonable, the actual attainment is a great thing; and especially so to trust the Lord, not by fits and starts, surrendering one day and retracting the next, but to abide by our furrender, and go habitually trufting through all the changes we meet, knowing that his love, purpole and promise are unchangeable. Some little faintings perhaps hone are freed from, but I believe a power lutrowoo s'

power of trusting the Lord in good measure at all times, and living quietly under the shadow of his wing, is what the promise warrants us to expect, if we seek it by diligent prayer; if not all at once, yet by a gradual increase: may it be your experience and mine.

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I am your affectionate friend,

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THE REV. MR. B

LETTER I

DEAR AND REV. SIR, Jan. 27, 1778.

I Call you dear because I love you, and I shall continue to stile you reverend as long as you dignify me with that title. It is indeed a pretty sounding epithet, and forms a striking contrast in the usual application. The inhabitants of the moon (if there be any) have perhaps no idea how many Reverend, Right Reverend, and Most Reverend sinners we have in Europe. And yet you are reverend, and I revere you, because I believe the Lord liveth in you, and has chosen you to be a temple of his presence, and an instrument of his grace.

I hope the two fermons you preached in London were made useful to others, and the medicines you took there were useful to yourself. I am glad to hear

hear you are safe at home and something better: Chearful spring is approaching, then I hope the barometer of your spirits will rife. But the presence of the Lord can bring a pleasanter spring than April, and even in the depth of winter.

At present it is January with me, both within and The outward fun shines and looks without. pleasant, but his beams are faint, and too feeble to diffolve the frost. So is it in my heart; I have many bright and pleasant beams of truth in my view, but cold predominates in my frost-bound fpirit, and they have but little power to warm me. I could tell a stranger something about Jesus that would perhaps aftonish him: such a glorious perfon! fuch wonderful love! fuch humiliation! fuch a death! And then what he is now in himfelf, and what he is to his people! What a fun! what a shield ! what a root! what a life! what a friend! My tongue can run on upon these subjects sometimes, and could my heart keep pace with it, I should be the happiest fellow in the country. Stupid creature! to know these things so well, and yet be no more affected with them! Indeed I have reason to be upon ill terms with myself! It is frange that pride should ever find any thing in my experience to feed upon; but this completes my character for folly, vileness and inconsistence, that I am not only poor but proud; and though I am convinced I am a very wretch, a nothing before the Lord, I am prone to go forth among my fellow-creatures as though I were wife and good. You

You wonder what I am doing, and well you may. I am fure you would if you lived with me. Too much of my time passes in busy idleness, too much in waking dreams. I aim at fomething, but hindrances from within and without make it difficult for me to accomplish any thing. I dare not fay I am absolutely idle, or that I wilfully waste much of my time. I have feldom one hour free from interruption. Letters come that must be answered; visitants that must be received; business that must be attended to. I have a good many sheep and lambs to look after; fick and afflicted fouls dear to the Lord; and therefore whatever stands still, these must not be neglected. Amongst these various avocations, night comes before I am ready for noon; and the week closes, when according to the flate of my business it should not be more than Tuesday. O precious, irreceverable time! O that I had more wisdom in redeeming and improving thee. Pray for me, that the Lord may teach me to ferve him better.

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LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

April 28, 1778.

Was not much disappointed at not meeting you at home. I knew how difficult it is to get away from ____, if you are feen in the street after breakfast. The horse-leach has three daughters, faying, Give, give: the cry there is, Preach, preach. When you have told them all, you must tell them more, or tell it them over again. Whoever will find tongue, they will engage to find ears. Yet I do not blame this importunity; I wish you were teized more with it in your own town; for though undoubtedly there are too many, both at N ____ and here, whose religion lies too much in hearing, yet in many it proceeds from a love to the truth, and to the ministers who dispense it. And I generally observe, that they who are not willing to hear a stranger (if his character is known) are indifferent enough about hearing their own minister.

I beg you to pray for me. I am a poor creature, full of wants. I feem to need the wisdom of Solomon, the meekness of Moses, and the zeal of Paul, to enable me to make full proof of my ministry. But, alas! you may guess the rest.

Send me the way to Christ. I am willing to be a debtor to the wise and unwise, to Doctors and Shoemakers. If I can get a hint or a Nota Bene from THE REV. MR. B——. 339 from any one, without respect to parties. When a house is on fire, Churchmen, Dissenters, Methodists, Papists, Moravians and Mystics, are all welcome to bring water. At such times, nobody asks, Pray, friend, whom do you hear? or, What

do you think of the five points? &c. &c.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

July 7, 1778.

Know not that I have any thing to fay worth postage, though perhaps, had I seen you before you fet off, something might have occurred which will not be found in my letter. Yet I write a line, because you bid me, and are now in a far, foreign country. You will find Mr, ____ a man to your tooth, but he is in Mr. W____'s connection. So I remember venerable Bede, after giving a high character of some cotemporary, kicks his full pail of milk down, and reduces him almost to nothing, by adding in the close to this purpose, 66 But, unhappy man, he did not keep Easter our way!" A fig for all connections, fay I, and fay you, but that which is formed by the bands, joints, and ligaments the apostle speaks of, Ephel. iv. 16. et alibi. Therefore I venture to repeat it. that Mr. ____, though he often fees and hears Mr. W-, and I believe loves him well, is a good man; and you will fee the invisible mark upon his forehead, if you examine him with your spiritual spectacles.

Now methinks I do pity you: I fee you melted with heat, stissed with smoke, stunned with noise. Ah! what a change from the brooks and bushes and birds and green fields to which you had lately access. Of old they used to retire into the deserts

for mortification. If I was to fet myfelf a moderate penance, it might be to spend a fortnight in London in the height of fummer. But I forget myself: I hope the Lord is with you, and then all places are alike. He makes the dungeon and the stocks comfortable, Acts xvi. yea, a fiery furnace, and a lion's den. A child of God in London feems to be in all these trying situations: but Jesus can preferve his own. I honour the grace of God in those few (comparatively few, I fear) who preferve their garments undefiled in that Sardis. The air is filled with infection, and it is by special power and miraculous preservation they enjoy spiritual health, when so many sicken and fall around them on the right hand and on the left. May the Lord preserve you from the various epidemical foul difeases which abound where you are, and be your comfort and defence from day to day.

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Last week we had a lion in town. I went to see him. He was wonderfully tame; as familiar with his keeper, as docile and obedient as a spaniel. Yet the man told me he had his surly fits, when they durst not touch him. No looking-glass could express my face more justly than this lion did my heart. I could trace every feature: as wild and sierce by nature; yea, much more so: but grace has in some measure tamed me. I know and love my keeper, and sometimes watch his looks that I may learn his will. But, oh! I have my surly fits too; seasons when I relapse into the savage again, as though I had forgotten all.

I am yours.

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

July 13, 1778.

S we are so soon to meet, as I have nothing very important to communicate, and many things occur which might demand my time; I have no other plea to offer, either to you or myself, for

writing again, but because I love you.

I pity the unknown confiderable minister, with whom you fmoked your morning pipe. But we must take men and things as we find them: and when we fall in company with those from whom we can get little other good, it is likely we shall at least find occasion for the exercise of patience and charity towards them, and of thankfulness to him who hath made us to differ. And these are good things, though perhaps the occasion may not be pleasant. Indeed a Christian, if in a right spirit, is always in his Lord's school, and may learn either a new lesson, or how to practise an old one, by every thing he sees or hears, provided he does not wilfully tread upon forbidden ground. If he were constrained to spend a day with the poor creatures in the common fide of Newgate, though he could not talk with them of what God has done for his foul, he might be more fenfible of his mercy, by the contrast he would observe around him. He might rejoice for himself, and mourn over them, and thus perhaps get as much benefit as from the best sermon he ever heard.

It is necessary, all things taken together, to have connection more or less with narrow-minded people. If they are, notwithstanding their prejudices, civil to us, they have a right to some civility from us. We may love them, though we cannot admire them, and pick something good from them, notwithstanding we see much to blame. It is perhaps the highest triumph we can obtain over bigotry, when we are able to bear with bigots themselves. For they are a set of troublesome solks, whom Mr. Self is often very forward to exclude from the comprehensive candor and tenderness which he professes to exercise towards those who differ from him.

I am glad your present home (a believer should be always at home) is pleafant; the rooms large and airy; your host and hostess kind and spiritual; and upon the whole all things as well as you could expect to find them, confidering where you are. I could give you much fuch an account of my usual head quarters in the city; but still London is London. I do not wish you to live there, for my own fake as well as yours; but if the Lord should so appoint, I believe he can make you easy there, and enable me to make a tolerable shift without you. Yet I certainly should miss you; for I have no person in this neighbourhood with whom my heart fo thoroughly unites in spirituals, though there are many whom I love. But conversation with most Christians is something like going to court; where, except you are dreffed exactly according to a prescribed standard, you will either not be admitted, or must expect to be heartily stared at. But you and I can meet

meet and converse, sans contrainte, in an undress, without fear of offending or being accounted offenders for a word out of place, and not exactly in

the pink of the mode.

I know not how it is: I think my fentiments and experience are as orthodox and calviniffical as need be; and yet I am a fort of speckled bird among my Calvinist brethren. I am a mighty good churchman, but pass amongst such as a differetr in prunella. On the other hand, the dissenters (many of them I mean) think me defective, either in understanding or in conscience, for staying where I Well, there is a middle party, called Me. thodiffs, but neither do my dimensions exactly fit with them. I am somehow disqualified for claiming a full brotherhood with any party. But there are a few among all parties who bear with me and love me, and with this I must be content at present. But fo far as they love the Lord Jesus, I desire, and by his grace I determine (with or without their leave) to love them all. Party walls, though stronger than the walls of Babylon, must come down in the general ruin, when the earth and all its works shall be burnt up, if no fooner.

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d I have along along the I am yours, &c.

LETTER V.

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MY DEAR SIR,

July, 1778.

I Was glad to hear that you were again within a few miles of me; and I would praise the Lord, who led you out and brought you home in fafety, and preserved all in peace while you were abroad, fo that you found nothing very painful to embitter your return. Many go abroad well, but return no more. The affectionate wife, the prattling children listen for the well known found of papa's foot at the door, but they listen in vain: a fall or a fever has intercepted him, and he is gone far, far away. Some leave all well when they go from home, but how changed, how trying the scene when they come back ! In their absence the Lord has taken away the defire of their eyes with a stroke; or perhaps russians have plundered and murdered their family in the dead of the night; or. the fire devoured their habitation.

Ah! how large and various is the list of evils and calamities with which sin has filled the world! You and I and ours escape them: we stand, though in a field of battle, where thousands fall around us, because the Lord is pleased to keep us. May he have the praise, and may we only live to love and serve him.

Mrs. — has been very ill, and my heart often much pained while you have been absent.

Q5

But the Lord has removed his hand: she is much better, and I hope she will be seen in his house to-morrow. I have sew trials in my own person; but when the Lord afflicts her, I feel it. It is a mercy that he has made us one; but it exposes us to many a pain, which we might have missed if we cared but little for each other. Alas! there is usually an ounce of the golden calf, of idolatry and dependence, in all the warm regard we bear to creatures. Hinc illæ lacrymæ! for this reason our sharpest trials usually spring from our most valued comforts.

I cannot come to you, therefore you must come hither speedily. Be sure to bring Mr. B-with you. I shall be very glad to see him, and I long to thank him for clothing my book. It looks well on the outfide, and I hope to find it found and favory. I love the author, and that is a flep towards liking the book. For where we love we are generally tender, and favorably take every thing by the best handle, and are vaftly full of candor: but if we are prejudiced against the man, the poor book is half condemned before we open it. It had need be written well, for it will be read with a suspicious eye, as if we wished to find treason in every page. I am glad I diverted and profited you by calling you a speckled bird. I can tell you such a bird in this day, that wears the full colour of no fect or party, is rara avis; if not quite fo fcarce as the phænix, vet to be met with but here and there. It is impossible I should be all of a colour, when I have been a debtor to all forts; and like the jay in the fable, have been beholden to most of the birds in the

the air for a feather or two. Church and meeting, Methodist and Moravian, may all perceive something in my coat taken from them. None of them are angry with me for borrowing from them, but then why could I not be content with their colour, without going amongst other slocks and coveys, to make myself such a motley sigure? Let them be angry; if I have culled the best feathers from all, then surely I am siner than any.

The Market has been and all grown

- Tam yours.

LETTER VI.

the sir for a feither of two. Charelt and meeting, Marina to the var "never to the others of

DEAR SIR.

August, 1778.

F the Lord affords health; if the weather be tolerable; if no unforeseen change takes place; if no company comes in upon me to-night (which fometimes unexpectedly happens) with these provisos, Mr. S --- and I have engaged to travel to on Monday next, and hope to be with you by or before 11 o'clock.

In fuch a precarious world, it is needful to formour plans at two days distance, with precaution and exceptions, James iv. 13. However, if it be the Lord's will to bring us together, and if the purposed interview be for his glory and our good, then I am fure nothing shall prevent it. And who in his right wits would wish either to visit or be visited upon any other terms? O if we could but be pleased with bis will, we might be pleased from morning to night, and every day in the year.

Pray for a bleffing upon our coming together. It would be a pity to walk ten miles to pick straws, or to come with our empty vessels upon our heads,

faying, We have found no water.

1 am yours.

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

Oct. 1778.

TOUR letters are always welcome; the last doubly so for being unexpected. If you never heard before of a line of yours being useful, I will tell you for once, that I get some pleasure and instruction whenever you write to me. And I fee not but your call to letter-writing is as clear as mine, at least when you are able to put pen to paper.

I must say something to your queries about 2 Sam. xiv. I do not approve of the scholastic distinctions about inspiration, which seem to have a tendency to explain away the authority and cer-Though tainty of one half of the Bible at least. the penmen of scripture were ever so well informed of fome facts, they would, as you observe, need express, full and infallible inspiration to teach them which the Lord would have selected and recorded for the use of the church, amongst many others, which to themselves might appear equally important.

However, with respect to historical passages, I dare not pronounce politively that any of them are, even in the literal sense, unworthy of the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, and the dignity of inspiration. Some, yea many of them have often appeared trivial to me; but I check the thought, and charge it to

my own ignorance and temerity. It must have some importance, because I read it in God's book. On the other hand, though I will not deny that they may all have a spiritual and mystical sense. (for I am no more qualified to judge of the deep things of the Spirit, than to tell you what is passing this morning at the bottom of the fea) yet if, with my present modicum of light, I should undertake to expound many passages in a mystical sense, I fear fuch a judge as you would think my interpretations fanciful, and not well supported. I suppose I should have thought the Bible complete, though it had not informed me of the death of Rebekah's nurse, or where the was buried. But some tell me that Deborah is the law, and that by the oak I am to understand the cross of Christ: and I remember to have heard of a preacher, who discovered a type of Christ crucified in Absalom hanging by the hair on another oak. I am quite a mole when compared with these eagle-eyed divines; and must often content myfelf with plodding upon the lower ground of accommodation and allusion, except when the New Testament writers assure me what the mind of the Holy Ghoft was. I can find the Gospel with more confidence in the history of Sarah and Hagar than in that of Leah and Rachel; though without Paul's help I should have considered them both as family fquabbles, recorded chiefly to illustrate the general truth, that vanity and vexation of spirit are incident to the best men, in the most favored situations. And I think there is no part of Old Testament history from which I could not (the Lord helping me)

me) draw observations, that might be suitable to the pulpit and profitable to his people: fo I might perhaps from Livy or Tacitus. But then with the Bible in my hands I go upon fure grounds: I am certain of the facts I speak from, that they really did happen. I may likewise depend upon the fprings and motives of actions, and not amuse myfelf and my hearers with speeches which were never spoken, and motives which were never thought of, till the historian rummaged his pericranium for fomething to embellish his work. I doubt not but were you to confider Joab's courtly conduct only in a literal sense, how it tallied with David's defire. and how gravely and graciously he granted himself a favor, while he professed to oblige Joab: I say. in this view you would be able to illustrate many important scriptural doctrines, and to shew, that the passage is important to those who are engaged in studying the anatomy of the human heart.

Believe me yours, &c.

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LETTER VIII.

My DEAR FRIEND, Oct. 27, 1778.

T Have been witness to a great and important revolution this morning, which took place while the greatest part of the world was asleep. Like many state revolutions, its first beginnings were almost undifcernable; but the progress, though gradual, was steady, and the event decisive. A while ago darkness reigned. Had a man then dropped for the first time into our world, he might have thought himself banished into a hopeless dungeon. How could he expect light to rife out of such a state? And when he saw the first glimmering of dawn in the East, how could he promise himself that it was the forerunner of fuch a glorious fun as has fince risen! With what wonder would such a new comer observe the bounds of his view enlarging, and the distinctness of objects increasing from one minute to another; and how well content would he be to part with the twinklings of the stars, when he had the broad day all around him in exchange? I cannot fay this revolution is extraordinary, because it happens every morning; but surely it is aftonishing, or rather it would be so if man was not aftonishingly stupid.

Such strangers once were we. Darkness, gross darkness covered us. How confined were our views? And even the things which were within

our reach we could not diftinguish. Little did we then think what a glorious day we were appointed to see, what an unbounded prospect would ere long open before us. We knew not that there was a fun of righteousness, and that he would dawn and rise and shine upon our hearts. And as the idea of what we see now was then hidden from us, so at present we are almost equally at a loss how to form any conception of the stronger light and brighter prospects, which we wait and hope for. Compatively we are in the dark still; at the most we have but a dim twilight, and fee nothing clearly; but it is the dawn of immortality, and a fure prefage and earnest of glory,

Thus, at times, it seems a darkness that may be felt broods over your natural spirits: but when the day-star rises upon your heart, you see and rejoice in his light. You have days as well as nights; and after a few more viciffitudes you will take your flight to the regions of everlafting light, where your fun will go down no more. Happy you, and happy I, if I shall meet you there, as I trust I shall. How shall we love and fing and wonder and praise the Savior's name!

Last Sunday a young man died here of extreme old age at 25. He laboured hard to ruin a good. constitution, and unhappily succeeded; yet amused himself with the hopes of recovery almost to the last. We have a fad knot of such poor creatures in this place, who labor to stiffe each other's convictions, and to ruin themselves and associates, soul and body. How industriously is Satan served! I was

formerly

formerly one of his most active under-tempters_ Not content with running the broad way myfelf, I was indefatigable in enticing others; and had my influence been equal to my wifnes, I would have carried all the human race with me. And doubtless some have perished, to whose destruction I was greatly instrumental, by tempting them to fin, and by poisoning and hardening them with principles of infidelity: and yet I was spared. When I think of the most with whom I spent my unhappy days of ignorance, I am ready to fay, I only am escaped alive to tell thee. Surely I have not half the activity and zeal in the service of him, who snatched me as a brand out of the burning, as I had in the fervice of his enemy. Then the whole stream of my endeavours and affections went one way; now my best defires are continually crossed, counteracted and spoiled, by the fin which dwelleth in me; then the tide of a corrupt nature bore me along; now I have to ffrive and fwim against it. The Lord cut me short of opportunities, and placed me where I could do but little mischief; but had my abilities and occasions been equal to my heart, I should have been a Voltaire and a Tiberius in one character, a monster of prophaneness and licentioufnefs. O to grace how great a debtor! A common drunkard or profligate is a petty finner to what I was. I had the ambition of a Cæfar or an Alexander, and wanted to rank in wickedness among the foremost of the human race. When you have read this, praise the Lord for his mercy to the chief of finners, and pray that I may have what was grace

grace to be faithful. But I have rambled, I meant to tell you, that on Sunday afternoon I preached from Why will ye die? Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11. I endeavoured to shew poor sinners, that if they died it was because they would, and if they would they must. I was much affected for a time: I could hardly speak for weeping, and some wept with me. From some, alas! I can no more draw a tear, or a relenting thought, than from a mill-stone.

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Posterior by Carelly to St. Mar. Co.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Nav. 27, 1778.

OU are a better expositor of scripture than of my speeches, if you really inferred from my last that I think you shall die soon. I cannot fay positively you will not die soon, because life at all times is uncertain; however, according to the doctrine of probabilities, I think, and always thought, you bid fair enough to outlive me. The gloomy tinge of your weak spirits led you to confider yourself much worse in point of health than you appear to me to be.

In the other point I dare be more positive; that die when you will, you will die in the Lord. Of this I have not the least doubt; and I believe you doubt of it less, if possible, than I, except in those darker moments when the atrabilious humor

prevails.

I heartily sympathize with you in your complaints; but I fee you in fafe hands. The Lord loves you, and will take care of you. He who raises the dead can revive your spirits when you are cast down. He who sets bounds to the sea, and fays, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, can limit and moderate that gloom which fometimes distresses you. He knows why he permits you to be thus exercised. I cannot assign the reasons, but I am fure they are worthy of his wisdom and love, and and that you will hereafter see and say, He has done all things well. If I was as wife as your philosopher, I might say a great deal about a melancholy complexion; but I love not to puzzle myfelf with fecond causes, while the first cause is at hand, which fufficiently accounts for every phænomenon in a believer's experience. Your constitution, your fituation, your temper, your distemper, all that is either comfortable or painful in your lot, is of his appointment. The hairs of your head are all numbered: the same power which produced the planet Jupiter is necessary to the production of a fingle hair, nor can one of them fall to the ground without his notice, any more than the stars can fall from their orbits. In providence no less than in creation he is Maximus in minimis. Therefore fear not; only believe. Our fea may fometimes be ftormy, but we have an infallible pilot, and shall infallibly gain our port.

I am yours, &c.

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LETTER X.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Feb. 23, 1779.

N Saturday, and not before, I heard you had been ill. Had the news reached me fooner, I should have fent you a line sooner. I hope you will be able to inform me that you are now better, and that the Lord continues to do you good by every dispensation he allots you. Healing and wounding are equally from his hand, and equally tokens of his love and care over us. I have but little affliction in my own person, but I have been often chaftened of late by proxy. The Lord, for his people's fake, is still pleased to give me health and strength for public service, but when I need the rod he lays it upon Mrs. - In this way I have felt much, without being disabled or laid aside. But he has heard prayer for her likewise, and for more than a fortnight past she has been comfortably well. I lay at least one half of her fickness to my own account. She suffers for me, and I through her. It is indeed touching me in a tender part. Perhaps if I could be more wife, watchful and humble, it might contribute more to the re-establishment of her health than all the medicines she takes.

I somehow neglected to confer with you about the business of the Fast-day. The last of my three fermons, when I had, as I expected, the largest congregation, congregation, was a fort of historical discourse, from Deut. xxxii, 15. In which, running over the leading national events from the time of Wickliff, I endeavoured to trace the steps and turns by which the Lord has made us a fat and thriving people, and in the event bleffed us beyond his favored Jeshurun of old, with civil and religious liberty, peace, honor and prosperity, and gospel privileges. fat we were when the war terminated in the year 1763, and how we have kicked and forfaken the rock of our falvation of late years. Then followed a sketch of our present state and spirit as a people, both in a religious and political view. I started at the picture while I drew it, though it was a very inadequate representation. We seemed willing to afflict our fouls for one day, as Dr. Lowth reads Ifa. lviii. 5. But the next day things returned into their former channel: the fast and the occasion feemed prefently forgotten, except by a few fimple fouls, who are despised and hated by the rest for their preciseness, because they think sin ought to be lamented every day in the year.

Who would envy Cassandra her gift of prophecy upon the terms she had it, that her declarations, however true, should meet with no belief or regard? It is the lot of Gospel ministers, with respect to the bulk of their hearers. But blessed be the grace which makes a few exceptions! Here and there one will hear, believe and be saved. Every one of these is worth a world; and our success with a few should console us for all our trials.

Come

Come and see us as soon as you can, only not to-morrow, for I am then to go to T—. My Lord, the Great Shepherd, has one sheep there, related to the fold under my care. I can seldom see her, and she is very ill. I expect she will be soon removed to the pasture above. Our love to Mrs. B——.

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LETTER XI.

MY DEAR FRIEND, April 23, 1779.

TAY I not stile myself a friend, when I remember you after an interval of feveral weeks fince I faw you, and through a distance of threescore miles? But the truth is, you have been neither absent nor distant from my heart a day. Your idea has travelled with me : you are a kind of familiar, very often before the eye of my mind. This I hope may be admitted as a proof of friendin my left um. Mine is a latter, which to in.

I know the Lord loves you, and you know it likewise: every affliction affords you a fresh proof of it. How wife his management in our trials! How wifely adjusted in feafon, weight, continuance, to answer his gracious purposes in sending them! How unspeakably better to be at his difposal than at our own! So you say; so you think; so you find. You trust in him, and shall not be dilappointed. Help me with your prayers, that I may truft him too, and be at length enabled to fay without referve, What thou wilt, when thou wilt, how thou wilt. I had rather fpeak these three sentences from my heart, in my mother tongue, than be mafter of all the languages in Europe.

I am yours.

resection, earliest, paralities, though the of mission

LETTER XII.

My DEAR FRIEND, August 19, 1779.

A MONG the rest of temporal mercies I would In be thankful for pen, ink and paper, and the convenience of the post, by which means we can waft a thought to a friend when we cannot get at him. My will has been good to fee you, but you must accept the will for the deed. The Lord has not permitted me, at sacrad tende way and talle

I have been troubled of late with the rheumatism in my left arm. Mine is a finful, vile body, and it is a mercy that any part of it is free from pain. It is virtually the feat and subject of all discases, but the Lord holds them like wild beafts in a chain under a strong restraint; was that restraint taken off, they would rush upon their prey from every quarter, and seize upon every limb, member, joint and nerve at once. Yet though I am a finner, and though my whole texture is fo frail and exposed, I have enjoyed for a number of years an almost perfect exemption both from pain and fickness. This is wonderful indeed, even in my own eyes.

But my foul is far from being in a healthy state. There I have labored, and still labor under a complication of diseases; and but for the care and skill of an infallible physician, I must have died the death long ago. At this very moment my foul is feverish, dropfical, paralytic. I feel a loss of ap-

petite,

petite, a difinclination both to food and to medicine: fo that I am alive by miracle: yet I trust I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. When I faint he revives me again. I am fure he is able, and I trust he has promised to heal me; but how inveterate must my disease be, that is not yet subdued, even under his management!

Well, my friend, there is a land where the inhabitant shall no more fay, I am sick. Then my eyes will not be dim, nor my ear heavy, nor my heart hard and bluech soy on on the to emelon a

One fight of Jesus as he is Will strike all fin for ever dead. et merch as ufast; fomeniere

Blessed be his name for this glorious hope. May it chear us under all our present uneasy feelings. and reconcile us to every cross. The way must be right, however rough, that leads to fuch a glorious end.

Oh for more of that gracious influence, which in a moment can make the wilderness foul rejoice and bloffom like the rose! I want something which neither critics nor commentators can help me to. The scripture itself, whether I read it in Hebrew. Greek, French or English, is a sealed book in all languages, unless the Spirit of the Lord is present to expound and apply. Pray for me. No prayer feems more fuitable to me than that of the Pfalmift, Bring my foul out of prison, that I may praise thy hame, and suc evad of : lubbohr at y exercis mid set or ; doist address in Itam, &c.

LETTER XIIICV bol

poits, a difficultiation both to food and to medicine; fo that I am afre by miracle: yet I truff I shall

My DEAR FRIEND, August 28, 1779

I Want to hear how you are. I hope your complaint is not worse than when I saw you. I hope you are easier, and will soon find yourself able to move about again. I should be forry, if to the symptoms of the stone you should have the gout superadded in your right hand, for then you will not be able to write to me.

We go on much as usual; sometimes very poorly, sometimes a little better: the latter is the case to-day. My rheumatism continues, but it is very moderate and tolerable. The Lord deals gently with us, and gives us many proofs that he does not afflict willingly.

The days speed away apace: each one bears away its own burden with it, to return no more. Both pleasures and pains that are past are gone for ever. What is yet suture will likewise be soon past. The end is coming. O to realize the thought, and to judge of things now in some measure suitable to the judgment we shall form of them, when we are about to leave them all. Many things which now either elate or depress us will then appear to be trisses light as air.

One thing is needful: to have our hearts united to the Lord in humble faith; to fet him always before us; to rejoice in him as our shepherd and our

our portion; to submit to all his appointments, not of necessity, because he is stronger than we, but with a chearful acquiescence, because he is wise and good, and loves us better than we do ourselves: to feed upon his truth; to have our understandings, wills, affections, imaginations, memory, all filled and impressed with the great mysteries of redeeming love; to do all for him; to receive all from him; to find all in him. I have mentioned many things, but they are all comprised in one, a life of faith in the Son of God. We are empty vessels in ourfelves, but we cannot remain empty. Except Jelus dwells in our hearts, and fills them with his power and prefence, they will be filled with folly, vanity and vexation.

Tam very affectionately yours.

in the proof you have, and which you give, that the Local is with you of a cruth. I rejoice on sour secount, to lee you hipported and comforted, and enabled to lay, He has done all things well. I reindee on my own steering. Buch inconces of his faithfulnets and all-functioney are verifiencouraging. We mult all expect boars of trouble in our tern. We must all feel in our concernments the vanity and ancerfainty of creature constants. What a morey is it to know from our own said experience and to have it engineers in its by the experience of odiere, that the kerd is good; a throng mold in the day of crouble, and that he knowers them that truff in him. Creatures see the candles, they walle while they afford as a little latt, and we kee them

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with a chewing acom and good, and loves us better cash we do corfelves;

My DEAR PRIEND, 00. 26, 1779.

BEING to go out of town to-day, I started up before light to write to you, and hoped to have sent you a long letter; when, behold! I could not get at any paper. I am now waiting for a peep at Mr. B—— at his lodgings, who came to town last night, and I shall write as fast as I can till I see him.

I feel for you a little in the fame way as you feel for yourfelf. I bear a friendly sympathy in your late sharp and sudden trial. I mourn with that part of you which mourns; but at the same time I rejoice in the proof you have, and which you give, that the Lord is with you of a truth. I rejoice on your account, to fee you supported and comforted, and enabled to fay, He has done all things well. I rejoice on my own account. Such instances of his faithfulness and all-fufficiency are very encouraging. We must all expect hours of trouble in our turn. We must all feel in our concernments the vanity and uncertainty of creature comforts. What a mercy is it to know from our own past experience, and to have it confirmed to us by the experience of others, that the Lord is good, a strong-hold in the day of trouble, and that he knoweth them that trust in him. Creatures are like candles, they waste while they afford us a little light, and we fee them extinguished

THE REV. MR. B-

extinguished in their fockets one after another. But the light of the fun makes amends for them all. The Land is fo rich that he eafily can, fo good that he certainly will give his children more than he ever will take away. When his gracious voice reaches the heart, It is I, be not afraid: Be still, and know that I am God: when he gives us an impression of his wisdom, power, love and care, then the storm which attempts to rife in our natural passions is hushed into a calm: the slesh continues to feel, but the spirit is made willing. And something more than submission takes place; a sweet refignation and acquiescence, and even a joy that we have any thing which we value to furrender to his call.

He deil William Hills

Yours, &c.

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